NOW AND THEN

Center for Appalachian Studies and Services/Institute for Appalachian Affairs
Volume 4, Number 1 East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee Spring, 1987

Photo by Alice Anthony

APPALACHIAN CHILDHOOD

Guest Editor
Pauline Cheek

$2.50

From The Editor
Pat Arnow

When guest editor Pauline Cheek and I started looking around for stories, memories and poems that would define Appalachian childhood, we soon realized that we were attempting the impossible. The more material we gathered, the more variety we encountered. Every child had a unique story, every adult had a unique memory. Appalachian childhood was American childhood, it was rural childhood and urban childhood, poor childhood and comfortable childhood, sociable and isolated, carefree and full of fear. We gave up trying to define the region and simply chose some short stories, poems and essays we liked.

It was clear to us that the process of growing up in Appalachia had changed enormously in the past 50 years. Two of the pieces we like best had to do with children who lived near nuclear facilities: Jan Barnett's short story, "Thief in the Night," and Marilou Awiakta's memoir of growing up in Oak Ridge, "Out!" We found out about innovative child care programs and an advocacy program for neglected and abused children. We wanted to find out what was on childrens' minds, so we asked for writing from the Johnson City Schools. According to the poems and stories we received from them, unicorns, robots and puppies are some of the things Appalachian children are thinking about these days.

With mountain children diving into the mainstream, will their rich heritage die out? A look through these pages will prove that there is no danger of that. Innovative educators (some of whom contributed articles and interviews for this issue) are working to encourage interest and pride in mountain heritage. Some of the results of their efforts, oral histories that were collected by students, are also included in this issue.

We are also proud to feature memoirs and letters of mountain people from as long ago as the Civil War. Book reviews and a special overview of Appalachian literature for children rounds out this special edition.

My only regret in working on this edition was that we did not have enough room to include much more of the fine work we had the privilege to consider. Getting to know and working with Pauline Cheek was the greatest privilege of putting out the magazine this time. She was a most cooperative, conscientious and interesting collaborator and I thank her for her efforts. I would also like to thank Robbie Anderson, gifted programs coordinator for the Johnson City schools. She worked enthusiastically to coordinate a project for gathering students' writing throughout the school system.

...from Golden Days

Don Baker was born in Kyles Ford, Tennessee (Hancock County) in 1925. He still lives there. He was interviewed by his daughter, Alice Shockley of Kyles Ford.

Home town - "Dad recalled that there were a lot of people who lived 'back in the holler' when he lived there, and that seven out of the holler went to fight in World War II. He went to the Army from there and when he returned, his father had moved out of the holler and near the highway and was selling goods at a little country store."

Games - "Penny Poker was his favorite."

Jokes/Riddles - "I couldn't get him to tell me any jokes and riddles. It's apparent he knew some, but wouldn't tell me simply because 'they're not fittin' to tell.' "

This is an excerpt from one of the ***Golden Days*** *oral history projects.* *For more information turn to page 37.*

From The Director
Richard Blaustein

1986 has been a challenging but rewarding year for the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services. The Centers of Excellence grant we received from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission gave us additional resources but also set further goals and objectives for us. I am happy to say we have successfully attained virtually all of our 1986 goals and are well underway on those for 1987. In fact, I am proud to report that CASS was named one of five outstanding Centers of Excellence, the only one with an interdisciplinary arts and humanities emphasis.

One of our major goals in 1986 was to support the study of local history and traditions in Tennessee schools; through the gracious cooperation of the Tennessee Department of Education, a specially revised version of the *Golden Days* introductory folklore and oral history collecting guide was distributed to schools throughout the state. One of the results of this effort was an invitation from Governor Lamar Alexander to join a special task force consisting of master teachers of history and social studies to develop an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to teaching Tennessee history and culture.

As of this writing, this task force has conducted a poll of statewide history and social studies teachers and has begun to develop an outline of a kindergarten through 12th grade resource and activities guide in Tennessee studies.

Since then the center has also been asked to host a Governor's School in Tennessee Studies for gifted high school students to be held on the campus of East Tennessee State University, June 14 -July 10, 1987. It is encouraging to be reminded that educational policy-makers recognize the value of interdisciplinary, culturally-sensitive fields like Appalachian Studies, oral history and folklore in elementary and secondary education. From our regional perspective, it is important to note that many important initiatives in this approach to education, notably *Foxfire,* have developed in the Southern Appalachian region.

Aside from the *Golden Days* project and its offshoots, the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services has helped to support a variety of projects aimed at improving the quality of life and self-esteem of Appalachian children. Our guest editor, Polly Cheek, has written *An Appalachian Scrapbook* which addresses the need of young mountain children to see themselves, their families and communities portrayed in a positive, supportive light; another fellow of the center, Dr. Judith Hammond of the department of sociology and anthropology at East Tennessee State University. has established a Court Appointed Special Advocate program. In this issue we also note the outstanding work being done by another Center of Excellence at ETSU, the Center for Early Childhood Development and Learning directed by Dr. Wesley Brown. Contributions to this latest issue of *Now and Then* from readers, contributors and subscribers have been nothing less than highly gratifying, and I want to thank all of you for making this magazine a success.

If you enjoy *Now and Then* and appreciate the work of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services, please help us grow by becoming a Friend of CASS. Individual subscriptions are $7.50 a year for three issues; $10.00 annually for schools and libraries. Larger contributions will help to support the work of the CASS Fellowship Program. Please make your tax-deductible check payable to: CASS/ETSU Foundation, Box 19, 180 A, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-0002.

THE BREAKER BOY

**The breaker boy rose at dawn,
Groaned, and pulled his hobnails on.
"Eat yer biscuit as we go,"
Said his Da, "We're late, ya know."
Astride Da's shoulders, tired and bent,
Into the breaker shed he went.
His blackened fingers, bent to claws,
Snatch coal spit up from the great, deep maw.
"Someday," says Da, "Ye'll dig wi' me."
(Da's already broken at twenty-three.)
By dying sun, they stumble, not stride.
Da's shoulders are much too tired for a ride.**

**And so it was in early times,
The unions yet to come.
The fathers worked for fourteen hours,
But then, so did their sons.....**

**The breaker's boy rose at dawn,
Groaned, and pulled Da's hobnails on.....**

--Jane Hicks

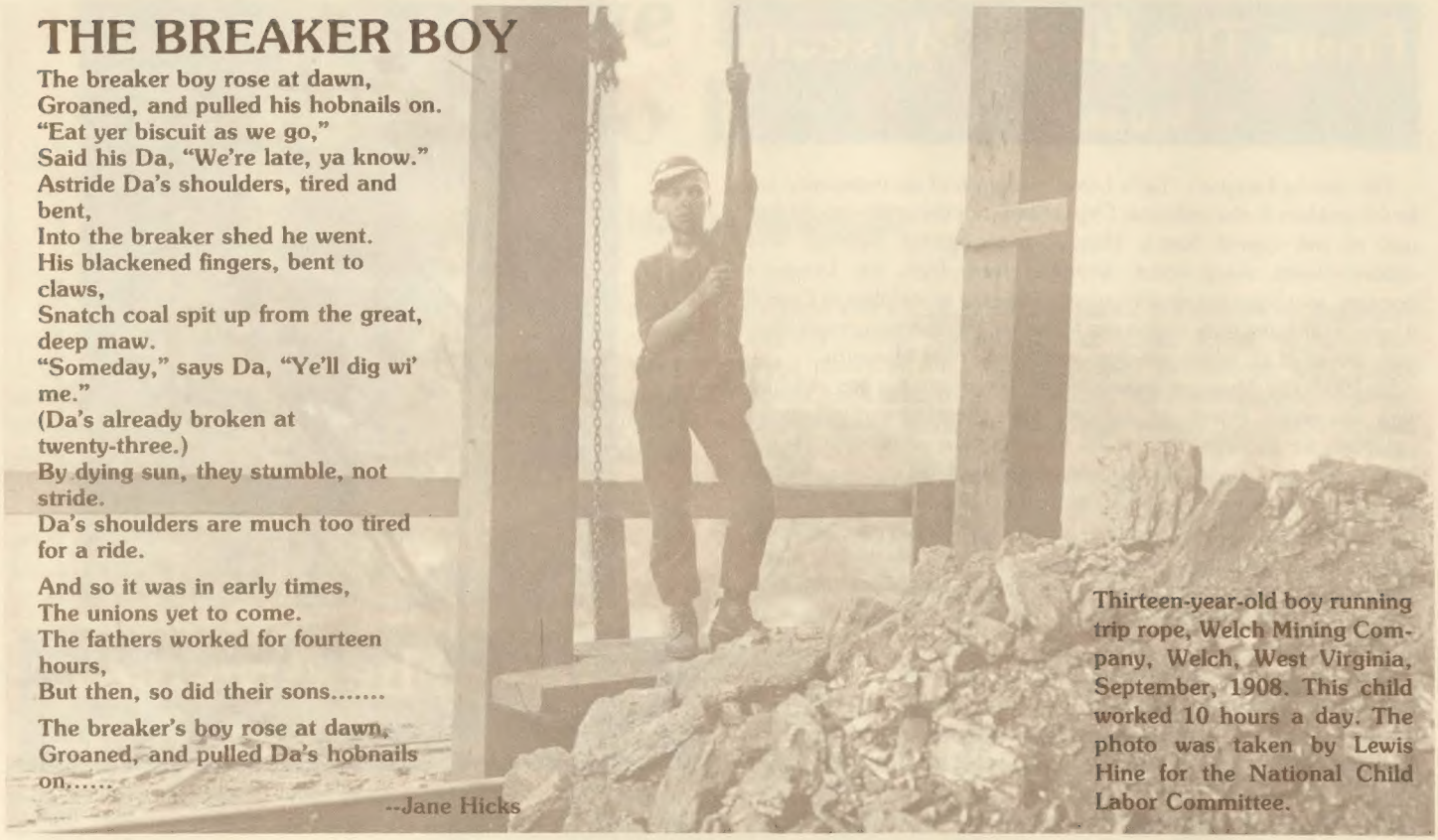

Photo courtesy of the National Archives, Lewis Hine Collection

Thirteen-year-old boy running trip rope, Welch Mining Company, Welch, West Virginia, September, 1908. This child worked 10 hours a day. The photo was taken by Lewis Hine for the National Child Labor Committee.

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From The Reece Museum

Margaret Carr

The Junior League's "Let's Look" program of art instruction for fourth graders in the Johnson City schools has become a traditional part of the Carroll Reece Museum's springtime offering. The children learn about color, line and form from the League's docents, and have the opportunity to view the art exhibits at Carroll Reece. Following their visit to the Museum, the children create their own works of art which are later exhibited in the Museum.

In 1982 the Museum expanded its programming for children with an entire month of exhibits and programming designed especially *for* children. One of the most popular portions of the exhibit is "Please Touch" where children (and adults) can experience the variety of textures present in arts and crafts. Included are items such as painted wood sculpture, welded steel sculpture, linoleum prints, acrylic paintings, woven pieces, pottery and blown glass. Demonstrations of crafts such as wood carving, spinning, weaving, pottery and papermaking enchance the child's understanding of these techniques.

Through the years a variety of exhibits and subjects matter have been the focus of the Museum's special month for children. Matt Evans of North Carolina presented his plasticene figures and pencil drawings in a one-child show; the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service's "Embroideries by the Children of Chijnaya, Peru," brought us embroideries depicting scenes and interpreting life in the Peruvian Andes; "Children Draw Animals," a traveling exhibition from the International Collection of Child Art at Illinois State University brought us children's representations of animals in a variety of media, techniques and interpretations; a collection of illustrations and drawings by Harrison Cady, the man who invented Peter Rabbit, was the core of "Harrison Cady: The Southern Image." In addition to pieces from his cartoons and children's book illustrations, a series of drawings and paintings depicting the Smoky Mountains and Charleston, South Carolina in the 1930s were included; "From Pencil to Computer Printout" by Gary Moran provided unusual drawings produced through computers. In addition, pencil drawings with such subjects as "The Lone Ranger" and others of interest to children were included; and the Tennessee Artist Craftsman Association provided a wide variety of craft items which appeal to children and adults alike. Included were pottery, woven items, woodworking, and paintings in a variety of media.

Special concerts and films have also contributed to the success of the annual exhibit. For instance, a 'cello concert was provided by Deborah Anne Granger who, at the time, was a 19-year-old sophomore at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. A Saturday afternoon children's film festival, focusing on different aspects of a child's world, has contributed greatly to the event's success. Beginning in 1985, Mary Jane Coleman provided Sinking Creek Film Festival works to the Museum's children events.

This atmosphere of fun is highlighted by the annual children's party. Pepsi, popcorn and balloons add to the excitement of the afternoon along with dances from the primary students at University School under the direction of Judy Woodruff of the ETSU Physical Education Department.

The Museum plans to continue its offering of art instruction and special programming for the children of the area and hopes to see this become an eagerly anticipated annual event. This year, from May 5 to June 10, the focus on children will again feature a hands-on exhibit, a film festival, a party and tours. For more information call the museum at 929-4392.

Courtesy of the Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University.

From The Archives

Marie Tedesco and Norma Thomas

One of the most controversial religious practices in 20th century America is the handling of snakes during religious services. Snake handlers belong to fundamentalist holiness churches which subscribe to a literal interpretation of the Bible. Believers adhere to the words of St. Mark (16:17-18): "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." If so moved, a believer in the "anointed" state may handle snakes as a demonstration of his/her faith.

Snake handling as a religious phenomenon began in the United States in 1909. In that year George Went Hensley of Grasshopper Valley, Tennessee, inspired by Mark 16:17-18, became convinced that the verses were commands which he was bound to obey. Shortly after handling a rattlesnake himself, Hensley began evangelical work. Eventually the practice of snake handling spread to other parts of the South and to the Midwest. Today the practice survives primarily in rural areas of the South.

The Archives of Appalachia holds a number of different sources on snake handling. A compilation of these sources, "Archives of Appalachia: Materials on Snake Handling," has been made and is available in the Archives. These are books in special collections, and copies of magazine and journal articles, and an MA thesis in the vertical files. Among the best materials, however, are the audio and video tapes which focus on the subject. Contained in the Burton-Manning Collection are two audio tapes which include the views and opinions of members of snake handling churches. The Burton-Headley Collection includes 32 video cassettes which relate to snake handling. Among these are the documentaries, "They Shall Take Up Serpents," and "Carson Springs A Decade Later." Other videos in the collection include footage used in making these documentaries, interviews with church members and recordings of church services.

The Archives of Appalachia are located in the basement of the Sherrod Library at ETSU and are open to the public during regular office hours. Call 929-4338 for futher information.

Creative Response to Life

Jane Harris Woodside

Pauline Cheek looks a bit like an aging child. Diminutive and quietly intense, Mars Hill, North Carolina, oral historian and author confides with a smile, "I've been accused of wanting to remain a child forever." Her own ambition, she says, is to live long enough to become an eccentric old lady. Since she has always found herself drawn towards the very young with their sense of wonder and the very old, she has no serious quarrel with either goal.

Born in Chapel Hill, Cheek is the daughter of a mother who grew up in a German-speaking Connecticut community and a father who was a North Carolina native, a minister and a professor of religion, ethics and sociology. Her family was close, one that took care to nurture her early and strong sense of individuality. She grew up in various North Carolina and Kentucky college towns, but summers were invariably spent with her paternal grandparents in rural Iredell County, North Carolina.

Pauline Cheek *Pat Arnow*

Those summers in the foothills of the Blue Ridge influence her still. She felt very much at home in the country. "I always identified with those who lived close to the land. And I think that predisposed me to like Appalachia when I later went with my husband to Mars Hill."

In addition, those childhood vacations gave Cheek the opportunity to spend time with her grandfather, a self-educated farmer and Baptist minister. Preacher Joe, as he was called, would read everything he could find, from comic books borrowed from a neighbor to poets such as Walt Whitman. As his reading broadened his horizons, his views on women and blacks became more liberal. "The idea that an older man was willing to change his whole attitude towards life was exciting to me," says Cheek. Learning, she realized, could be a lifelong process.

Cheek now asserts, "I'd like to go to school every day of my life." Her passionate love of learning, however, didn't fully emerge until after she earned her MAT in English from Duke University. "I *hated* public school," she remembers. In first grade, she periodically ran away from the classroom. What bothered her most about conventional education was her nagging feeling that she was guilty of failing. "It may have been that I was overly sensitive," she allows, "but I always felt that I was failing somebody no matter how hard I tried. And that destroyed all my chances to explore just for the pure joy of exploring."

Her dissatisfaction with school fostered an early interest in alternative education. She read about the short-lived experimental schools founded by Bronson Alcott, the 19th century Transcendentalist who pioneered child-centered education based on the Socratic method. Also, she became intrigued by the Scandinavian folk school movement started in Denmark by theologian and folk scholar Svend Grundtvig. Aimed at meeting the educational needs of the common people, folk schools were places where adult students and teachers lived and learned together. Cheek made a promise to herself that one day she would visit a folk school.

As a very small child in Chapel Hill, Cheek went out most evenings to wave at the conductor of a train that rolled by her home. And most evenings, she could see in the distance a tall boy who also came out to greet the nightly train. He was one of the "big boys" who lived down the track. When Cheek was four, the family moved away from Chapel Hill, but years later, she again ran into the still tall Edwin Cheek whom she married in 1958 when both were on the faculty of Wingate Junior College, near Charlotte.

Shortly afterwards, Edwin enrolled in the doctorate program at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. While her spouse did his course work, Pauline gave birth to Edith and Edwin. Cheek abandoned her own teaching career since in her background, wives were helpmates and husbands were providers. However, she did do a number of odd jobs to help support the growing family while her husband was in school, including babysitting, tutoring foreign students and drawing maps for the sociology department. Once her husband completed his course work, the family moved to western North Carolina where her husband had accepted a position at Mars Hill College. There, Cheek finished typing her husband's dissertation at 8:30 one evening and delivered their third and last child, Elizabeth, less than five hours later.

For the next 10 years, she largely spent her time raising her three children and doing volunteer work with organizations such as 4-H. When her youngest child was three, Cheek began a series of short-term jobs once again, ranging from helping to start a pre-school in a local church to organizing the Mars Hill College Library's Appalachian Room, a collection which has Bascom Lamar Lunsford's ballad collection as its nucleus.

While lying under the dining room table one day, an eight-year-old Cheek wrote two poems in a little notebook her father had given her. "I read them to my parents, and they didn't seem very excited," she recalls. "I thought they were pretty nice." In spite of the lack of critical acclaim, she decided there and then that she would be a writer. For years, she satisfied her very strong need to write mainly by keeping a diary.

Then in 1972, Mars Hill College's dean of women visited a children's literature class which Cheek was auditing to talk about

her hobby, collecting ABC books. Cheek inquired as to whether such a book had ever been done using Appalachian materials. When the woman replied no, Cheek went back to her school-aged children and posed the question, "If you were going to write an ABC of Appalachia, what would you write?" With their mother acting as referee, the children sat around the table that night and engaged in intense debates over what each letter should represent. They finally settled on two items for each letter. During the next few years, Cheek and her children collected family stories having to do with the items they had selected for their alphabet book. "As we rode somewhere, we were always writing stories or telling stories," she recalls. "So I kept paper and pencil handy in the car and jotted them down."

Then around 1975, Cheek attended an oral history society meeting in nearby Asheville and discovered that what she was doing in preserving these family stories was in fact oral history.

In the summer of 1976, Cheek wrote a short narrative for each item based on family stories she and the children had collected. What emerged was *An Appalachian Scrapbook*, described by Cheek as a portrait of Appalachia of the 1970s as experienced by one family. Since Cheek couldn't afford to pay an illustrator, she did the drawings for the volume herself. The book has been accepted for publication by Appalachian Consortium Press and is due to come out this spring.

Cheek continued with her work, to date largely unpaid, in oral history and Appalachian studies. "I loved doing interviews," she says. "That was the kind of writing I wanted to do." For example, she has prepared a 4-H manual designed to help young people collect their county's heritage and interviewed people in a four-county area in Western North Carolina as to the importance of meal time for family life.

Her most ambitious project to date was her study of the hooked rug industry in Mars Hill and surrounding Madison County. While working in the Mars Hill Appalachian Room in 1975, Cheek came across an old picture that piqued her curiosity, a picture illustrating the process of producing a hooked rug. Then, during her very first oral history interview, she discovered that in the 1920s and 1930s, making hooked rugs was a major cottage industry in the area. Women helped meet their families' newly acquired appetites for the consumer goods they saw advertised in catalogues with the proceeds from the sale of their handmade rugs. Her fieldwork, which included interviews with over a hundred informants, was funded with a Berea Fellowship. In 1983, with the help of a North Carolina Humanities Committee grant, Cheek's interviews were translated into a booklet on the history of the hooked rug industry published by Mars Hill College. Two years later, Cheek organized a permanent exhibit on the craft for Mars Hill's Rural Life Museum.

The most important result of her study has been a renewal of interest in rug making. "Now, people are going into their attics and barns and finding rug patterns, rug machines, the scraps of material they used. Also, they are finding sources of income. There are maybe 200 people in the county who are getting some income now that they're laid off from their jobs," reports Cheek with pride. "And I find this very rewarding."

Her interests in crafts, alternative education, children and history coalesced in two undertakings at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina, in 1984 and last fall at the Pine Mountain Settlement School in Bledsoe, Kentucky. Derived in part from the Scandinavian folk school, such noncredit "schools" place great emphasis on experimental education, on learning by doing. They exist to serve diverse cultural and educational needs of the people in the surrounding area while generally trying to preserve the Appalachian way of life. Cheek has already produced a manuscript detailing John C. Campbell's 60 year history.

She intended to engage in a similar effort at Pine Mountain during her three-month stay this past fall. Two days after her arrival, however, the school's staff resigned *en masse* for a variety of reasons, and consequently, she found herself doing a little bit of everything--tutoring local children after school, serving as housemother, taking children enrolled in a week-long environmental workshop on night hikes, and working in the plant center.

The kind of education that takes place as a result of such activities agrees with Cheek's ideals. "I look upon education as teacher and student not facing each other but facing in the same direction, excited about something, each respecting the other as equally able to search out the truth and to share their enthusiasms. I think that's really all that's required of education," she asserts. Preacher Joe's granddaughter believes that education is essentially "a continuous self-evaluation process, so that you're learning about where your strengths lie, where your weaknesses lie, what compensations you could make for the weaknesses and what would be most supportive of the strengths." According to Cheek, orthodox education, with all its emphasis on living up to imposed standards, crushes the vitality and zest for living that children come by naturally.

"My overall concern has been the family tied to the land," says Cheek, "the family in an ecosystem, the family in a community--but always the nurturing of the individual." What she wants to nurture most of all in the individual, young and old, is what she terms "the creative response to life." For her, any act which expresses the inner self qualifies as creative. "I believe that there's a creative force which is a spiritual dimension. One of the most exciting things, and I think one of the most important, is to participate in that," she asserts. One of the reasons that Cheek feels such an affinity for children is that with their active imaginations and their spontaneity, they naturally respond creatively to life.

Cheek does not believe that "childhood is necessarily different in Appalachia from childhood elsewhere." She comments, "My feeling from the very beginning is that people are people. Of course, a person is born into a context, a time and place, a family and a community. Therefore, he needs to have some understanding of that. And he is influenced by being in Appalachia. But I'm not so certain that it is so different from the rural South in general."

What sort of future does this oral historian and author see for herself? "I never worry about it," she replies. "Life to me is tremendously exciting. And I see all of my life as a whole, one thing leading to another, and all making me who I am now."

...from Golden Days

Richmond Lindsey McMurray of Blountville, Tennessee was born in Hiltons, Virginia in 1913. He is the great uncle of interviewer Rose Hutchins, an ETSU student from Blountville.

His family on both sides were farmers in Scott County. His maternal grandfather, he said, was a "farmer and moonshiner. Still House Holler is where he made his likker." His ancestors came from Ireland.

"Mommy got sick one time and had to go to Bristol and be operated on for gallstones. They brought her home on the train to Hiltons and they carried her home on a cot, six or seven miles up the hills and hollers.

"There's 11 of us and we were all born in one bed. It was a corded bed. It had ropes to hold it up. That bed made history."

This is an excerpt from one of the **Golden Days** oral history projects. For more information turn to page 37.

An ABC to Bledsoe Harlan County, Kentucky

Pauline B. Cheek

During the fall of 1986, while working in the after-school enrichment and environmental studies programs at Pine Mountain Settlement School in Harlan County, Kentucky, I became acquainted with a participant in Eliot Wigginton's Berea workshop for teachers. A native of Bledsoe in Harlan County, Anita Baker teaches fifth grade in the local Green Hills Elementary School. At her invitation I spent one morning with her class. Several of the children had already met me, and they clustered around me, introducing their friends, pointing out the best artist in the class, showing me a quilt made by Anita's grandmother, which was hanging on the wall. I then read to them two letters sent me by school children in Lancaster, Kentucky, asking for information about Kentucky. In response the class decided to put together an ABC of Bledsoe, for which I served as scribe:

A. We live in the **Appalachian** Mountains, on the north side of Pine Mountain.
B. **Bledsoe** is our Post Office. Hester Sparks if our postmistress.
C. **Coal** is our black gold. Our **crops** are corn, beans, carrots, onions, cabbage, strawberries, and sweet potatoes.
D. There is **danger** from **dynamite** and coal trucks.
E. **Explorers** come here out of curiosity about our land. Sometimes they turn their cars or campers around in our yard.
F. This is a fine place for finding **fossils, fishing,** and **forests.**
G. We are **God-fearing** people, and **Green Hills** has **good ground** for **gardens** and **goats.**
H. We raise **horses, hawks, hogs,** and **hens.**
I. Before the Trail of Tears, when Cherokees had to go to a reservation in Oklahoma, many **Indians** lived here: Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Shawnees. They left many arrow points at Camp Branch.
J. We invite you to **journey** through our mountains *if* you treat us with respect and help us protect our environment.
K. We will be **kind** to you if you are kind to us.
L. We have been **logging** since the early 1900s.
M. **Mountain men** and **mamas** are **marvelous.** Our fathers take us bass fishing and hunting for squirrels, rabbits, 'possoms, coons, and deer. Our mamas care for us; they help us with our homework, and they take us to the doctor when we are sick. They love us.
N. Our land is **naturally** beautiful. We have evergreen and deciduous trees, mountains, flowers like sunflowers and daisies, wildlife, and plenty of water in creeks, ponds, streams, lakes, rivers, branches, dams, and waterfalls.
O. We are proud of being **opposites;** everybody is an individual, and we *like* differences.
P. Our older **people** tell us wonderful ghost stories.
Q. We ask our pappaws and mammaws **questions** about nature, guns, and making things.
R. The **railroad** now hauls coal, but when our parents were little they could catch a train in Putney and ride over the mountain to Harlan and from there to many different places.
S. We have **snakes:** copperheads, rattlers, water moccasins, and non-poisonous ones.
T. Our nearest **town** is the county seat of Harlan, nine miles away from our school, and on the south side of Pine Mountain. Sometimes we catch **turtles,** and some people eat them.
U. We are **unique** in our ability to take care of ourselves.
V. **Variety** is great -- in land, wildlife, and people.
W. We have gained **wisdom** by observation, schooling, and experience.
X. This is an **exceptionally** good place in which to live.
Y. We **young** people are creative and smart.
Z. Our teacher says we are **zealous** when we are given encouragement.

Two boys on workmen's railroad car.

Courtesy of the Southern Appalachian Photographic Archives, Logging Collection, Mars Hill College.

Thief in the Night

Jan Barnett

The little girl lifted the screen and dropped her pillow onto the low-pitched roof. "I'm telling Mama you climb out on the roof every night," announced baby sister from the bed across the room. One brown eye turned to the side. Daddy called it going fishing, but the older child had another name for it. "Oh shut up, Cross-Eyes! Go ahead, tell. I don't care! I'll tell about all the milk you've been stealing for Miss Miller's cat, too. Baby!" She pulled her legs back inside and sat in the window with her tongue stuck out and flapped her hands up and down beside her ears.

"I'm telling," Baby wailed and slid down under the covers. Her older sister climbed out on the roof and sat on the pillow and watched. She bit her nails and eyed the same heavy cloud hanging in the distance and the same lights glaring on the flat-topped buildings beneath it. Behind the plant, trains rumbled and things went clang, bang the way they always did. She winced and stuck her thumb in her mount to soothe the torn flesh. Men's voices echoed against the mountainside and traveled through the dark. Night after night they said the same things, but she was never sure just what.

She began to imagine the explosion. The bombs in the factory exploded, crashing louder than the worst thunder she had ever heard. A giant mushroom appeared in the sky and the entire town was destroyed with fire and brimstone. It was just like the preacher said. There was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth and the moon turned to blood and the sun became as sackcloth and ashes. Then the Son of Man appeared on clouds of glory to gather his elect.

Whack! A window next door slammed shut to keep out the factory's nightly release of ammonia. Her hand flew from her mouth and hit the tin roof, cold and moist in the Fall air. Tears from the vapors streamed down her face and caused the cloud to contract and expand like a big luminous monster. She sucked her fingers to keep the bitten quicks from bleeding until the fumes finally chocked her back inside.

Baby didn't move as she eased into bed and positioned the pillow under her head. Still watching, she imagined the cloud and the lighted buildings. That way the explosion would never come like a thief in the night and they would all be safe.

In her dreams she traveled back to the mountain where they lived before Daddy got the job at the plant beneath the cloud. She asked to play on the hillside in front of their house. Mama said, "Alright, but don't wander off too far. A varmit'll get you."

She crossed the fence and started climbing the ridge. It was dark beneath the pines. She met Him again. He stood like a man, but his face was that of a big red-bone hound. His huge ears flowed into the folds of his red-gold garment of hound fur and his eyes were like those in Mama's brown picture of Jesus. He didn't speak or move, just looked. He was the Varmit. She was frightened and tried to run.

The alarm clock went off in her parent's room. She twisted and turned trying to find a position where her full bladder would be more comfortable. After a while, familiar words blared from the radio downstairs. "This is Herbert W. Armstrong and the Plain Truth of the World Tommorrow. Friends, Armageddon is at hand."

She headed for the bathroom. The door was closed and she could hear vomiting. Daddy's voice came from inside, "Go on back to bed, Jetta, I'm alright."

Holding herself until she got outside, she squatted behind a boxwood a few feet from the back porch. The cloud was still lit up from the lights on the buildings. She was standing on the porch bannisters to get a better look when Mama opened the kitchen door. Mama said, "What're you doing out here, little lady?"

"I had to pee. Daddy was in the bathroom."

Mama replied, "We've got neighbors now. Want them to see your hind end? You're nine years old, too big for such as that. And get down from there before you fall."

In the kitchen, Daddy was sitting at the table with his head in his hands. Jetta walked over and put her arms around him. "What's wrong Daddy? Why're you sick?"

Mama looked anxiously in his direction. "Think you ought to go in today?'

He lifted his head long enough to answer, "Have to, Nell. I'm not hot enough to stay off. I'll be in a different building today."

Jetta felt his forehead and his arms. He didn't feel too hot to her either.

Mama was sticking the biscuits in the oven. She called over her shoulder, "Jetta, go tell Frank and Katie to get up."

A box of Moon Pies was open on the cabinet beside Daddy's lunchbox. On her way out, she swiped one and stuck it under her pajama top.

Upstairs, she yelled for Mama's benefit, "Kids, get up. Breakfast's ready."

After they sat down to eat, she grabbed four of the prettiest biscuits and lined her plate. Then she poured Mama's hot brown sugar syrup over a big slab of butter.

Daddy said, "Why don't you eat some gravy, something that'll stick to them little bony ribs?"

Mama said, "What would people think if they come in and seen your plate? They'd think you'd been starved."

Jetta never looked up from the biscuit she was soaking in butter and syrup. As soon as Mama left to call the kids again, she lined up more biscuits. Then she said, "Daddy, I'm glad we don't have to eat President Ike's give away no more." He smiled and picked at his eggs.

* * *

Today like every other day after school, Jetta ran to the backyard where Bulla was kept chained to the smokehouse. The big red dog jumped up on its hind legs and laid a paw on each of the little girl's shoulders. Keeping a lookout for Mama, Jetta put her head up close to Bulla's so the big dog could lick her face. Then she took Bulla's head in her hands and kissed the fur just above the moist, black nose.

Katie came around the corner of the house with the neighbor's cat clutched in her arms. She said, "Jetta, Daddy's hot."

Bulla's hackles raised and her head lowered like the growl in her throat. While the cat hissed a gray streak for the garden, Jetta grabbed at the dog's flying chain, but fell full length of a potato hill covered with morning glories instead. Jerking free of the vines, she scowled at her baby sister and yelled, "See what that stupid cat caused!" Katie squalled and pulled her dress over her head, but Jetta was already headed down the alley after Bulla.

The alley ended in a blacktop road across from a graveyard. The

Courtesy of the Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University.

Courtesy of the National Archives.

Child digging from coal refuse in Scott's Run, West Virginia December 23, 1936. The photographer comments that it was a cold day and the child was barefoot "and seemed used to it." The photo was made by Lewis Hine as part of the National Research Project, a record of the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

big hound was making her way up the hill among the rows of markers. Jetta called, "Here Bulla, here girl," but the dog never looked up. Out of breath from running, she sat down on one of the lower stones to rest just as Bulla made a dash for the wood beyond the cemetery.

When Jetta reached the top of the hill, the big dog had a squirrel treed in one of the locusts. Bright red Virginia creeper ran all over the trees. It looked like blood dripping down their trunks. But these woods were nice, not dark like the ones where she met the Varmit. The yellow and orange leaves were all lit up by the sun and some of the underbrush had begun to die down.

She tugged at Bulla's chain. The squirrel scolded furiously, but the big coon dog had already lost interest. As they wandered down the back side of the woods, the hound sniffed in the underbrush and the little girl gathered leaves to press in her school books.

They came to a gravel road bordered on the far side by a tall, chain link fence. Jetta stopped, surprised. Beyond the fence, on the level ground beneath the mountains, were clusters of one-story white buildings. This was the plant where Daddy worked. She looked for the cloud, but it wasn't there. It was never there in daylight.

Suddenly an alarm sounded and men came running out of the buildings. Jetta pulled Bulla back into the woods and started up the hill. She'd heard this alarm before from the house. This might be it. The big explosion. She imagined the fire and brimstone and weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. She should have been watching and ready.

Tears were still streaming down her face when she reached home. Mama looked upset, but all she said was, "Get in the house and get that dress off. If it's not already ruined." Then she yelled to Frank in the kitchen, "Get out here and chain that good for nothing dog back up."

Frank was in the eighth grade. He winked at Jetta on his way to the smokehouse. Bulla wagged her tail and fawned in front of Mama.

On her way upstairs, Jetta stopped and turned on the living room light. Daddy was lying on the couch. He said, "Turn it back off, honey."

She put her hand on his forehead. "Are you hot, Daddy?"

"Yes honey, I am, but I'll be alright. You and Katie be good. O. K.?"

Frank came over and ruffled Jetta's hair. Daddy said, "Son, get your mommy and help me to the bathroom."

He and Mama lifted Daddy off the couch and helped him across the room. Jetta went on upstairs and sat and bit her nails until time for supper.

Daddy didn't come to the table. Mama sat on a stool beside the couch and fed him from a tray in her lap. Jetta propped one elbow on the table with her head resting on her hand. She didn't say anything when Frank hogged all but three of the beef chunks. There was a funny, choking feeling in her stomach that went all the way up to her throat. Finally she said, "When I get hot, I don't get sick. Why's Daddy sick?"

Frank finished a swallow of milk before replying. "He got hot at work. That's why. It's the radioactive. Like atomic bombs."

Jetta widened her eyes. "Daddy makes bombs, doesn't he?" she said.

"No silly, he don't make bombs. He makes fuel."

She didn't understand. "Can it blow up?"

Frank rolled his eyes. "I said it was radioactive, didn't I? Well then, don't you guess it can blow up?"

Jetta remembered Daddy talking about the atomic bomb that was dropped on Japan. It exploded into a big mushroom and all the people died. She decided to ask more questions. "The plant's never blowed up, so how can Daddy be sick?"

"I told you. It's the radioactive." He stood up and shoved his chair back. Jetta wanted to ask if Daddy was going to die, but he looked too aggravated. In a minute, he stalked out of the room.

Katie looked up from the stew she was playing with and said, "See Jetta, I told you Daddy was hot." She had a big white milk ring around her mouth and one eye was going fishing. Jetta glared at her. "No he's not!" she said. "Dummy! You don't know nothing!" Then she ran to the living room and sat in the dark with Daddy.

The Old Place

Edward J. Cabell

The southern mountains have always been very special to me. I guess it springs from the emphasis placed on the significance of the land and our family heritage that I received from my grandmother, Hessie (Myrtle Baker Haley), and my great-grandmother, Aunt Cassie (Cassie Hayes Baker).

I was born in 1946 at grandma's house in Eureka Holler--a McDowell County coal camp near Eckman, West Virginia--but I spent many of my early childhood days running the fields of our family farm, The Old Place, in Chatham Hill, Virginia. Today Interstate 81 runs through a portion of the land.

The Old Place was up a cove that even granddaddy's old Ford couldn't drive up. I spent many hours here listening to stories about our Smythe County relatives or "relations" as the older family members called them. Apparently the Baker-Hayes-Smith families were the major slave-holding families in the county. Over the years their slave descendants had acquired a considerable amount of land as well as respect for their hard work, farming skills, and pleasant personalities. I was one of those proud black descendants.

Aunt Annie, in Marion, had been one of the early black teachers in the county. She married Jerry Smith and moved from The Old Place to town. Aunt Inez and great grandma also taught school. Henry Baker, my great granddaddy, was a very good farmer and provided quite well for the family. My uncles and cousins were also known to be good farmers, especially my cousin, Jim Dale Hayes. As a result of their labors I was able to spend hours in the fields of The Old Place daydreaming about the tales of our family heritage during my early childhood. Even before school age I was able to recall numerous tales I'd heard and every now and then I'd make up a tale or two of my own. Grandma always said that I had a good imagination and she would encourage me in my endeavors to tell tales instead of lies. She felt that this was good for me and she predicted that I would someday become a preacher or a writer.

I especially liked to make up tales about our hunting hounds. Lady and Queen, two short-legged beagles, were my favorite subjects. I never really got caught up in hunting though. I loved the woods but I did not like killing the wild and defenseless critters that made the woods so alive and exciting. I can vividly remember my first squirrel hunting adventure. I was about five years old. I went out with the men. I was real quiet and enjoyed stalking the squirrels. I was used to doing this. However, when the time came to shoot the squirrels I yelled to the top of my lungs, "Run squirrels run, they're gonna shoot ya!" This became a big laugh at many of our family gatherings for years.

Chores were required of everyone at The Old Place. I was usually responsible for helping feed the barnyard animals and weeding the vegetable garden. I actually enjoyed the garden work once the tomatoes and cucumbers were ripe. I'd get me some salt and head for the garden to "work."

Every day was a real adventure. There was always something to explore--the tobacco barn, the sheep meadow, the silo, the spring house, the brook that ran through the farm. I never ran out of material with which to make up tales.

My younger cousins lived in Marion so I was often the only boy on The Old Place for long periods of time during the 50 s. Houses were scattered so I really didn't get to know many children on other farms. Besides, I was the only black child in the area until my sister, Caldonia or Janie Belle (actually Janice), joined us on visits.

There were three or four young white boys that I played with occasionally at church functions or wheat and tobacco harvests. Sometimes we would fight. They would gang up on me and call me names. After discovering that I could not expect much help from the older blacks, I decided to do something about the situation myself. I knew that I couldn't beat them all by myself, but once we were in a pasture field or in a barn I could pretty much even things out through a cow dung fight. I had pretty good aim so after two or three of these battles I was fairly well respected among the other boys. From that day to this I have always figured that most problems can be worked out one way or another if you stand up for your rights.

After reaching school age I didn't go back to The Old Place much. There was no school for blacks in Chatham Hill. I would have had to go to Marion and stay with Aunt Annie's grandchildren in order to get any formal schooling. Great-grandma died the year I turned school age. Grandma returned to West Virginia. In the great Pocahontas coal field of southern West Virginia I grew up with the children of other coal mine and railroad workers. However, I shall never forget my early days spent at The Old Place in the hill country of southwestern Virginia.

Sundays

Susie Gott

I remember Sunday afternoons, playing with the neighbor girl. I was five, and she was younger than I, but every other day of the week found her in the fields. She was little and wiry, and could run faster than I could, and she wielded a hoe, picked beans, stripped tobacco along with the grown men. Her older sister carried the sprayer among the sprawling rows of tomatoes, and all we could hear for a while was the whish, whoosh of the poison as it hit the vines. I recall the itchy feeling on my skin as we crawled among the beans and corn, and the stickiness left all over my body and lingering in my hair after a day in the tobacco (only we always called it "baccer"). We were too little to hand the sticks, but we followed around after the men and women gathered together for the occasion, picking up any single leaves that were dropped along the way, tying bunches of them together with rubber bands. We found old snuff cans in the barn and stuffed them with last year's dusty leaves and pretended they were medicine. Others, we would stuff with boxwood leaves. The smell of boxwoods always curled my nose, but they made good cubby holes for hiding.

The hayloft was forbidden territory because it was food for the cows and mules, but we always somehow managed to slip up there, carefully avoiding the spiders in case they were "black widders." Sometimes a snake slithered out when we moved a hay bale, and we stood back respectfully as we watched his tail disappear down a knothole. Then we would go watch the pigs search for a left-over carrot or piece of bread, picking a stalk of sour rhubarb and sucking on it as we walked. We wandered daringly through the pasture, trying to stay out of sight of the bull. We carried in wood for the fire that would cook dinner, and then gleefully rolled down the hill next to the woodshed, trying to avoid the spots where the chickens had been, seeing how long we could go before we were too dizzy to stand up.

And usually, we would end up in the kitchen to reach into a drawer of fresh, warm biscuits....

Memories of Lynn Garden

Tony Feathers

In 1970 I was nine years old and skinny as a rail. I don't remember any world events or major happenings, but I do remember the little things...the important things that made growing up easy in Lynn Garden, Tennessee.

I remember our sloping backyard and weaving dandelions into the chainlink fence that surrounded it. I imagine now that Mom and Dad had that fence put up to keep us from wandering into trouble, but as a nine year old I remember thinking then that it was built to mark the out-of-bounds for all our games. I remember the swing set anchored on the only level spot in our yard where we spent hours swinging and belting out our own lyrics to songs like "Age of Aquarius" and "Hang on Snoopy." I remember the two apple trees that must have been put on this earth for us to climb and to shade our wooden sandbox.

I remember my neighborhood...the small frame houses surrounding a one lane street, my grandparents' place directly across from ours, and the tall shaggy hedge that separated our yard from our next door neighbors'. It seemed like everyone in the neighborhood worked at the Eastman except my parents. Dad worked at Mead Paper, while mom worked shift-work at the hospital. I remember how our hillside came alive after five o'clock with neighbors cutting their lawns or raking leaves.

I remember our dog "Billy-goat," who once ate a hole in his doghouse and must have been hit by a car at least six times. I remember being attacked by the dog across the street...Blackie. I remember the neighbor's bell high on the pole that supported their basketball goal and how we would ring the bell and then run from the angry wasps who had made it their home. I remember riding down the hill behind the house in a little red wagon and crashing into the fence. I remember climbing up on the silver oiltank that sat just behind the house. It supplied the fuel to our furnace but we were more interested in listening to the hollow echo as we pounded its side.

I remember school with its oiled, hardwood floors and those big iron radiators that clanked all winter and melted crayons and sneakers. I remember hanging upside down on monkeybars and milk and Twinkies at break time. I remember getting spanked by the teacher for touching too many straws in the lunch line. I remember catching a big red salamander and taking him to school where he lived most of the year in a large mayonnaise jar on the bookshelf. I remember how frightened I was when I lost the buttons from my shirt in a scuffle during P.E. And I'll never forget having to walk down the back steps after school everyday to meet my little brother and look for my grandmother's station wagon.

I remember staying with my grandmother. She was our refuge until mom and dad returned home from work. I'll always remember her vegetable-beef stew on cold snowy days and the two large tin cans hidden in her kitchen cabinet. (One was for cookies, the other for potato chips.) I remember the *Guiding Light* was always on in the afternoon. I remember my grandfather's workshop hidden in the basement, and the many times I dug through his tool chest for nails needed for the treehouses we were building in the woods behind the house. I remember my uncle's room with stacks of *Hot Rod* magazines and plastic model cars. I remember the Sunday night gospel singings, hosted by my grandparents and accompanied by my mother on the piano.

I remember warming in front of an electric stove on cold mornings and lying in front of a humming electric fan on balmy nights. I remember watching *Gilligan's Island* and eating in the car at McDonalds were both special treats. I remember vacations at the beach and camping in my grandparents' tent. I can still envision a gold bicycle with high rise handle-bars and a license plate with my name on it, dangling from the back of a banana seat.

I don't remember feeling lonely or sad or thinking that we were rich or poor. Looking back, I don't think I ever realized that there was a world outside of Lynn Garden, Tennessee. I was busy figuring out multiplication and racing my brothers.

I do remember it was easy.

Family visit to Washington, D.C. August 1971. L-R: Uncle Lucion Marcum, Congressman Jimmy Quillen, Gene Feathers and his children Greg, Wes and Tony. Lucion has passed away, but Congressman Quillen is still East Tennessee's representative, Gene still works at Mead Paper in Kingsport, Greg is married and about to become a father, Wes is a Senior at East Tennessee State University and Tony is a graduate assistant in art education at ETSU.

Growing Up In Washington, County Tennessee

Now and Then

Alina Oxendine

Alina Oxendine is 11 years old and a sixth grader at Stratton Elementary School in Johnson City. Her great-grandmother, Pearl Jackson, was born in 1903 near Jonesborough, the oldest of seven children. Mrs. Jackson has been a seamstress, a professional cook, a wife, a mother, a matriarch.

Recently, her granddaughter, Jill Oxendine, and great-granddaughter, Alina, interviewed her in her Jonesborough home. They have noticed that growing up in East Tennessee has changed a bit:

ALINA

On school days, I get up at 6:30 a.m. I get up, get dressed and eat breakfast with my Dad. Mom's still in bed with my younger sister. I have to walk about one block to the bus stop with my little sister. We always sit about the third seat back. As the bus fills up, the louder and worse it gets. When we get to school, I nervously enter the building, hoping I have everything. The day passes quickly, but is very hectic. There is a tight schedule to follow. I have five teachers for different subjects and change rooms five times during the day. Then there's P.E., library, band practice, and music too.

PEARL

My mama always cooked breakfast. She made biscuits, fried meat and gravy. And she checked us to see that we was clean, then we had to walk to school, sometimes long distances...When I was in high school, I rode the horse to school sometimes, when they wasn't using the horse...now we didn't have tablets and notebooks and all. We each had a slate...we wrote on the slate and had little erasers. Later, we went to a big old white school building in Bulls Gap. It had a big, black round pot belly stove. They carried water in a bucket to school with a dipper. Everybody drunk out of that one dipper. Just remember this now that back in my school day, we didn't have no inside toilets, we didn't have no water, and our mother washed on a board and always kept us clean.

ALINA

My dad is the product assurance manager for a big, missile plant in Bristol, Tennessee. We have never moved because of Dad's job, but we moved once because of other things. I was nine years old at the time. Sometimes I babysit my sister when mom's working or my parents are not home. I only have one sister but I think one is enough!

PEARL

My father was a railroad man. He worked for the Southern Railway System...My Daddy moved around and we had to go wherever he went. After I got up to be a pretty good-sized girl, everytime one of the children was sick and my mamma needed me, she'd keep me at home to help her work. She had a baby or two while I was in high school. I'd stay and cook and take care of things. I was the oldest of seven. Charlie was the youngest. I carried him around the many of a time.

ALINA

When I was younger I remember playing "hand games" at lunch time. We liked to chase each other on the playground and turn flips. Sometimes we played a game called Red Rover. But now that I'm older, I play board games and sit around and talk with my friends.

PEARL

At school, we'd play ball. I could run like a hant. We played hide and seek and Up Jinz where you put a marble under your hand and everyone had to guess where the marble was.

ALINA

When I was little, my friends and I would go and play in a wooded area known as "the dirt trail." We liked to make play forts, pick wild raspberries, and climb trees. In the summer, we would sell drinks such as lemonade. Lots of people would stop and buy them on their way to the swimming pool up the street. And the drinks were really cheap. Once we even sold brownies and cookies and then went to the skating rink with the money that we earned.

PEARL

I didn't have any hobbies when I was a young girl, because I always had to work. But I remember something about an old lady who lived next door to us. She had a porch that came around. She had her some clothes that she was mending, patching. And she had a little snuff box sitting right down next to the post with a little brush in it. I told Cora (little sister), "Let's get us a little dip of snuff while she's gone."

And we went and got a dip of snuff out of that little tin box. Well, we didn't like it. We spit it out and we run and got us some water to wash it out of our mouths. And honey, it made us so sick, as sick as a dog. I never have took another dip of snuff or smoked a cigarette.

ALINA

By writing this article I got to know my great-grandmother a lot better. I learned that even though the environments we grew up in were very different, we are still alike in many ways. When I visit my great-grandmother, I enjoy being in her presence and I admire her cooking.

From **At The Crossroads.** *©Harvey Wang. Used by permission. Courtesy of the Southern Appalachian Photographic Archives. Mars Hill College.*

Dellie Norton on her porch with her granddaughter, Glena, Sodom, North Carolina.

OUT! Children at Play Oak Ridge, Tennessee 1945-1950

Marilou Awiakta

"Can you come out? A tree's down in the woods! A big one! The storm last night must've done it." Wayne jiggled from one bare foot to the other on the porch steps of our B-house, which were griddle-hot in the July sun. "It's the biggest tree you've ever seen...goes from one side of the hollow to the other! Let's walk the log."

"I have to ask Mama."

Since she was nearby in the kitchen, Mama asked first, "Have you finished your chores, Marilou...made your bed, run the vacuum, dusted..?"

"Yes, ma'am. All but the dusting..."

"Hm..." It sounded like "no," but she was smiling, probably thinking of times she'd told me about when she was ten years old and played in trees. "I guess the dusting can wait," she said. "Go on out."

Out! Out! Out! The place to be. Children in the neighborhood of South Tampa Lane (and there were dozens of us) played out as much as possible and where the whim took us -- tree-studded yards, unpaved streets, deep woods. Mama said sometimes we looked like schools of fish swimming around.

As I bolted through the back door, she called, "Remember, dares go first." The words tied onto me like ribbons on my long, black braids, bumping gently against the back of my mind as Wayne and I ran through my yard, then by the Smiddie's house. Our feet were summer-tough, so we hardly faltered as we crossed the gravel-packed dirt of Tabor Road and made our way down the rough path where the woods began to the boardwalk, just below the lip of the hollow. A different world here -- shadowed, cool, alive with rustle, twitter, hum and the succulent odor of moist loam and growing leaves. From the direction of the tree we heard shouts and laughter...

"Wayne, do you think anybody's walked the log yet?"

"Bet not...too high...scary..."

The boardwalk carried the sound of our running feet ahead of us, and a girl's voice rang out, "Hey, y'all. Somebody's comin'...!"

We arrived. And stopped short...

The tree was awesome. Its trunk, immense and straight, reached across the "V" of the hollow -- perhaps 20 feet high over the deepest part. On the far side, the wide, heavy limbs had taken smaller trees with them as they crashed down. Here and there a branch shook where some of our friends were exploring the damage. On the near side, where we stood, was a crater, smelling of deep earth -- the biggest hole I'd ever seen. Upended at its edge was the tree's vast wheel of jagged roots. Finger-wide at the rim, the roots became more and more sturdy toward the center, where the great taproot -- which had held on longest and snapped off clean -- stuck straight out for about four feet, showing its might. Yet, the wind, which we had never seen, had been stronger. And the tree, though felled, was still alive and would be weeks in dying. The mystery of it all was irresistible.

Down in the crater, Janice and her cousin, Linda, stopped rummaging long enough to shout hello. And Freddie, who had ventured a little way out on the trunk, jumped down and said to me, "I dare you to walk it!"

I gauged the danger of the tree. Slowly pulling the end of my braid through my hand, I weighed the advantages of being the first to walk with the possibility of falling off.

I looked back at Freddie and said, "Dares go first."

Freddie shook his head.

But Wayne jumped onto the trunk, near the base. The most wiry and agile of us all, he could have climbed the tree, even if it had been upright. He moved around, getting "the feel" of the log. Freddie yelled, "Wayne's gonna walk it!"

Heads popped up through the fallen branches; two boys and a girl began climbing down. Out of sight, someone wading in the creek called, "Wait for me." From further up the hollow came the snap of twigs as other kids rushed toward the log. When about 15 of us had ranged ourselves below it to watch, Wayne gripped the bark with his feet, took his mark on the fallen branches, lifted his arms for balance, and slowly began to walk...

We held our breaths, thinking with him: *"Steady as you go...steady...keep your eyes on the mark...the highest part now --don't look down...steady...don't hurry...almost safe...keep going..."*

"He made it!" We hollered and cheered. Above us Wayne beat his chest and gave a Tarzan yell.

Then Linda said she'd try. And Freddie said, "Me next."

We whiled away most of the afternoon with the tree. On the way home, three of us stopped by Mary Jean's house to play on her rope swing. It was the best one in the neighborhood because it hung from a high limb, had a sturdy knot on the end of it, and a wide clearing around it. You could get a good running start and swing in a soaring arc without the risk of braining yourself on another tree.

The rest of the day went as usual. Since most of our fathers worked at the plants (doing what they weren't allowed to say) and left work at the same time, everyone had supper between 5:30 and 6:30, then drifted out again, most often to South Tampa Lane, which was a dead-end and flat. During twilight we played "Red Rover," "Crack-the-Whip" or "Hop Scotch." (When the street was finally paved, we also rode bicycles and roller-skated).

"Hide-and-Seek" and "Kick-the-Can" were our favorite games after dark, when the woods seemed to draw closer to the small houses, bringing the scent of honeysuckle, and street lights cast soft, white circles on the road. "Hide-and-Seek" was fun but the problem was that those who were "caught" were likely to tell on those trying to make "home-free." In "Kick-the-Can," the "caughts" were helpful because the clatter of tin set everyone free.

We learned the wisdom of mutual advantage and also of knowing your adversary. Having played together so much, we knew the ways of anyone designated "It" -- who ranged far, who tricked you by pretending to be out of sight, who "hugged the base." Each of us created a strategy accordingly. Scattering wide during the count --when "Its" eyes were closed -- we maneuvered back to the base, creeping along the edge of the woods or around the houses, darting from bush to tree. Strategy plus speed, silence and surprise were the keys to success.

In France, in the mid-1960 s, when I was an interpreter for U.S. Air Force during the NATO withdrawal, I would adapt the skills I'd learned in these games to power politics, which are "Hide-and-Seek" and "Kick-the-Can" on a grand scale -- except the stakes are higher.

Another important element of our summer was going barefooted. "School's out, shoes off!" was our motto around home. (Church, downtown, and other public or formal places meant "shoes on.") From the first of May, the persistent question to our parents was, "Can I go barefooted?" Some said "yes" right away. Others like mine, who were Appalachians "of the old school," insisted, "Wait 'til the ground warms up. It's hot on top but cold underneath. It's not good for your bones -- it'll make you have rheumatism later in life."

Now I appreciate my parents' wisdom, but at the time I said, "Other kids are doing it." And the next day asked again, "Can I go barefooted?"

We children didn't need books to tell us, "The earth is a living organism." We knew it through our feet and we wanted that connection as soon as possible. Also, because we lived on the atomic frontier, where change and flux swirled around us, we intuitively reached toward Mother Earth to help us feel rooted, grounded, centered. Mama suggested an even deeper meaning of going barefooted, which she said I would some day understand:

MOTHER'S ADVICE WHILE BANDAGING MY STUBBED TOE

If you go barefoot in the world
you have to take bad stubs in stride --
or hide in shoes. "Be plucky, like an Indian,"
that's what my papa said to me.
And always test the "seems" of things --
briars may lurk in dew-drenched grass
and jagged glass in heaps of leaves.
The toughest sole can't bear these
without a wound.
Bare feet can't tease nature. So
choose your path with wary eyes
and do likewise with humans too.
Be wary, but run on...
Go barefoot and feel the joy
and when pain comes, bind up your toe
and go your way again.
"Be plucky, like an Indian."*

Good advice. As children, however, we weren't often thinking of "deeper meanings." We were concerned with ourselves and what to do next.

Our choices were governed not so much by seasons as by weather and availability of playmates. Most friends came from the neighborhood, which followed the contour of the hilltop -- North and South Tampa Lanes and the upper portions of Taylor and Tabor Roads. Except for two flat-tops, the houses were cemestoes -- A's, B's, or D's -- and in every house were two or three children. (Oak Ridge had a young and very prolific population.)

Aside from the atom, Oak Ridge had two things that made our childhood different from that of most children from other places. One was the fence. It encircled the whole area, about 94 square miles. When I tell non-Ridgers about it -- the barbed wire, watchtowers and armed guards -- they look worried and say, "Didn't you children feel *oppressed*?"

*From *Abiding Appalachia: Where Mountain and Atom Meet* by Marilou Awiakta.

"We *loved* it!" I laugh when I remember how free and safe we felt to roam at will. "Where are the children?" "Out and gone," was a frequent exchange among our mothers. Of course, we had to tell them our general direction -- "the woods" or "Jackson Square to the movie" or "around home." But other than that, nobody worried. Everyone knew that to molest a child on government property was a federal crime. The FBI would be after him -- fast. Whether or not this was *legally* accurate, it was commonly believed to be, so it had the same effect.

Which brings to mind the second difference in our Oak Ridge environment -- FBI men. We spotted them easily -- by their dark suits, white shirts and neat ties, usually blue -- and they were very polite. I made a jingle of our attitude toward them:

HONEY, RUN ANSWER THE DOOR

Is it Fuller Brush, Jewel-Tea
or the cleaner passing by?
Oh, no ma'am, it's none of them,
it's just the FBI.

If there was nothing else to do, my younger sister, Adele and I sat in the living room with Mama while the FBI man asked her questions about the neighbors. (A family could be moved out overnight for breaking security). Mama was always polite but non-committal. Once, when Adele was about four years old, she was cuddled on Mama's lap sucking her thumb while the FBI man was asking the usual, "Do Mr. and Mrs. C. talk a lot? (meaning "Do they mention his work?"). Are they loud?"

Adele took her thumb out of her mouth and said indignantly, "She yells at her children!" In her mind this was grounds for arrest.

At Elm Grove Grammar School, which was at the bottom of the hill, we students had a favorite guessing game: "Who is the secret agent?" We'd heard that the FBI had them in unlikely places, and we decided that the one at our school was the custodian, who ambled around the halls pushing his broom, listening... I wonder if he knew we thought he was a secret agent. Or if he *was*...

At recess, the playground offered a creek, a few swings and seesaws and a field.

On the surface, the playground -- like our childhood -- seemed open, unsophisticated, carefree. But hidden from the casual observer, between the edge of the field and the sheared off side of a pin-topped hill, was "The Ditch" -- deep, rocky and, because of its use, menacing.

We were living in the Cold War era. Since Oak Ridge was considered a prime target, scientists had warned us of what could happen in an atomic attack -- about the death-light, fireball and fall-out. School "disaster drills" were frequent. At the blast of the horn --more startling than the fire drill bell -- we lined up in the halls, then hurried through the double doors and ran to The Ditch.

Huddled there, with our hands and bare knees pressed against sharp rocks, we waited for the "All Clear" to sound. Little Kids giggled and punched each other. But many of us Big Kids were silent, forced back into the terrible ditch at the edge of our minds that we tried to keep out of our sight: World War II. Memories of it jabbed us: *Pearl Harbor...War..."Will Daddy have to go?"...air raid drills...convoys...dreaded telegrams, "We regret to inform you." Images from radio and newsreels: guns, bombers, tanks...men dying, children crying in rubble, Dachau survivors looking like skeletons...and always, always, the fear that the enemy was nearby, just over the next hill...Then Hiroshima, and end of war forever. Or was it? What if...?*

"All Clear!" The siren brought us scrambling out of The Ditch, out of bad memories. Out! Out! Out! We recovered joy quickly,

regrouped, flowed away. Sometimes loners drifted off -- slightly disoriented, as if seeking direction -- then drifted back again. We were children at play. We were also chidren who, like the "earthquake goldfish" of Japan, responded to the first harmonic tremors of an upheaval we felt but could not name -- the Atomic Age. We were going to need all the lessons of our childhood, especially, "Keep your eyes on the mark...don't look down...steady as you go..."

I did walk the log in the fullness of my own time. Months after the great tree fell and I'd become well-acquainted with it, I gripped the bark with my feet, took my mark, lifted my arms, and walked the log...alone.

As my life cycled toward my 14th year -- and puberty -- I spent hours by myself, roaming the woods, listening... By that time the branches of the tree had mouldered, the crater silted in, the trunk settled lower in the hollow. Washed clean, dried and tough, the roots were my favorite part of the tree, the comforting part. I felt the wind of change rising -- in my own body and in Oak Ridge. It was 1950. The fence was down. People with more means were moving out of the neighborhood to different parts of town. Technology was gaining power. The era of the atomic frontier and of my childhood was drawing to a close. Although the change seemed good, somewhere deep in my mind I was anxious, sensing perhaps that one day the wind would reach gale force and threaten to topple me by loosening my roots. One thing would save me. The great taproot of my Cherokee/Appalachian heritage would hold fast.

This essay first appeared in *These Are Our Voices - The Story of Oak Ridge, 1942-1970*. Edited by Jim Overholt. Children's Museum of Oak Ridge, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, 1986

National Guard weapons demonstration at a Vet Center picnic, Johnson City, Tennessee, 1986.

The Flood

Drema S. Redd

The back yard of the house they shared with her Gran was the foot of a mountain, not much good for playing. The front yard stretched from the porch to the bank of the creek, with a higher bank on the other side that the road was built on. Across the road was another mountain. Beth's favorite places to play were the woods on the other side of the road and the creek. But her mother worried about copperheads in the summertime, so she played in the yard, mostly, especially since her fifth birthday had come that summer, and with it a new swingset from her Gran.

Halloween was over, most of the candy had been eaten, and it was too cold to play outside. Beth was staring out of the window at the rain. There were no more leaves on the trees, and she could see into the wood where she liked to play. It had been raining for a long time and the creek was now in the yard. The peonies at the edge of the creek bank were covered by the rising water. She couldn't remember the last time she had been able to play on her swingset. It was dark even in the daytime and all she could do was stay indoors and watch cartoons or play with her dolls and her little sister, Nancy. She was tired of all the rain, tired of playing indoors. She wanted something to happen.

"Mommy, is it flooding at Mamaw's, too?" Beth's mother sat in an armchair; Nancy, who wasn't even two, was on Mommy's fat lap, sucking her fingers.

"No, there's no creek at Mamaw's." Mamaw lived downtown. There were no woods, but she did have a big yard with trees in it. They were going to spend the night there.

The front door opened and her Daddy came in, dripping wet. "We ought to get out of here before the bridge goes. Get the kids packed, Jeannie, and we'll head for your mother's. I parked the car down at the head of the hollow. Where's Ernie?"

Daddy stomped through the house, looking for his cousin Ernie. He was in the bathroom, shaving. Mommy went to the girls' room and began rummaging through some drawers. Gran came in from the kitchen and stood by the window.

"Lord, Lord, what a mess," she said. "We could build an ark and float out, like Noah did, right Nancy?" Gran picked Nancy up like a rag doll and sat down with her.

"We're going to Mamaw's before the bridge goes out, Daddy said." Beth bounced up and down on the couch in front of the window as she watched the raindrops beat into the rising water. It was in the middle of the yard, now, and moving very fast, like rivers do. She couldn't wait to go outside and be part of the flood. She wondered what was taking them so long.

"Tell her I said Hello," Gran said. "And you stop hopping on that couch."

Beth stopped hopping and just rocked back and forth a little on her knees. "Ain't you gonna go?"

Daddy came in then, followed by Ernie, who had patches of shaving cream still on his face. "Of course she's going," Daddy said. "The water's almost up to the porch steps now, and ain't likely to stop soon. That old bridge is going to wash out, then you'll never get out of here."

"I ain't going nowhere. This is my house I worked and slaved for, and if it goes, I go with it." Gran got up and got her large black sweater from the living room closet and wrapped it around Nancy. Beth hopped off the couch and took the coat Gran handed her. Just then, Mommy came out of the bedroom with a little suitcase. Beth moved out of her way, in case a smack was coming. Her

Mommy's tummy was as round as a big ball, and Beth once asked if that's where the new baby was. Her mother looked at her sharply and smacked her face and said not to ask questions like that. Beth hadn't mentioned it again, but she knew there was a baby coming because they had told her that, and the only place it could be was in her Mommy's fattening tummy. She went to stand by the door so she could be the first one out.

"Get the kids, Ernie, and I'll help Jeannie. Mom, are you sure you don't want to go with us?" Her daddy knew as well as she did that there was no use arguing with her Gran. She'd do as she pleased, now as always. Mommy was helping her into the coat; she put the hood up. When she turned around, Beth pushed it off again.

"I'll be here when you get back, the Lord willin'," said Gran. She turned on the TV. "At least the electric ain't out. I can watch Ed Sullivan."

Ernie said, "She knows what she's doin,' Earl. I seen floods up here before, and so have you. This house ain't goin' nowhere, but if you want to get the kids and Jeannie out of here, that's your business. I'll be back after I help load 'em in the car, Gran." Ernie picked Beth up in one arm and Nancy in the other. He had a little glob of shaving cream in his ear and smelled funny. Beth wished her Daddy would carry her instead. She had never liked Ernie much. One day that summer, in the bad heat, she watched Ernie and her daddy cutting weeds on the hillside behind the house. Ernie was dripping sweat and mad at everybody. When she asked if she could cut, too, he told her if she didn't quit hanging around there he'd cut her head off and throw it in her face. It had taken her days to figure that out, and she even had a nightmare about it. She wasn't any too happy about being carried out by him.

Ernie followed her Daddy and mother out onto the dark porch. The water was rushing through the yard and there was a loud roar coming from every direction at once. Suddenly the porch was bright orange and beyond it, only brown and black swirls; Gran had turned on the porch light. It had stopped raining, and she heard her Daddy shout that the water should start going back down now. Daddy held Mommy's arm and helped her down the steps, holding the small suitcase over his head to keep it from getting wet. There were four steps to the yard, and the water was now up to the third one. As her Mommy stepped into the water, one of her shoes floated off her foot and swirled downstream. Her mother squealed, then giggled, "Never liked those shoes much, anyway," Beth heard her shout over the roar. Beth could see dark shapes floating by them -- garbage, mostly, and now and then a kid's toy or a garbage can. The wind was blowing her hair around her face and the bare trees on the hillside looked like giants dancing.

Ernie said to hold on tight, and stepped carefully down the steps and into the water. Beth looked back and waved to Gran, who was watching them from the doorway. Nancy started crying. Slowly, they waded across the rickety driveway bridge, the link from their yard to the road, though they could barely see it for the water. Beth could feel it shaking and wondered what it would be like for the bridge to break and send them downstream in the cold water. Would Ernie still hold on to her? She couldn't swim, but she wasn't afraid. It would be like riding a roller coaster at the carnival. Nancy was squirming in Ernie's other arm. He stumbled and said a word Beth would have been slapped for. "Hush up," Ernie growled, "and stay still, Nancy Jean. We're almost there."

The neighbor's car was parked in the road; it wasn't flooded because it was higher up than the yards in the hollow. The neighbor said to get in, he'd drive them to the head of the hollow where their car was parked. They got in, Mommy and the girls, but Daddy and Ernie said they'd walk to the car and warm it up. The neighbor was waiting for his wife. They sat and shivered in the dry car, peering out into the blackness at the brightly lit house that her Gran refused to leave. She had shut the front door, and Beth could see the blue light of the TV through the open curtains. Beth snuggled down into the seat and put her thumb in her mouth. The neighbor's wife was taking a long time, and Beth was growing sleepy. As if from far away, Beth heard Mommy say, "There goes the swingset."

Nancy was crying harder, and Beth pushed past her to the window for a better look. She watched as her swingset lifted from its place in the front yard, swayed, then tipped over with a soundless splash and floated away to the Kanawha River with the neighbors' garbage and her Mommy's shoe.

Now it was Beth who was crying. "My swing!" she screeched, "Mommy, go get my swing!" She started to open the car door, but her mother held her back.

"There's not a thing we can do about it," Mommy said. "It's gone, and you'll just have to do without."

"But I want my swingset," Beth sobbed, barely able to get her breath from crying so hard.

"We want a lot of things we can't have," her mother said firmly. "Maybe we can get you another one, next summer."

"I don't want another one, I want that one!" Beth screamed. "I hate the flood and I hate you and all I want is my swingset!"

Beth was slammed against the door by her mother's hand at the neck of her jacket.

"Don't you talk to me like that," her mother hissed, her face close to Beth's in the dark car. The roar of the flood outside sounded like her mother's voice, deadly and cold. "You better get used to things being taken from you. That's our life. Things come and go -- there are things you'll want but never have and there's nothing you can do about it. Now shut up."

Beth's tears burned her face and taught her a lesson.

Michael Smith

Mall, Johnson City, Tennessee, 1987.

Insights and Experience
a talk with Eliot Wigginton

Pauline Binkley Cheek

Despite nationwide critical acclaim for the *Foxfire* books and growing popular adoption of their methodology, Eliot Wigginton is exceedingly careful to avoid making generalizations or predictions concerning Appalachia and its people. "Serendipitous" is a word he uses repeatedly in describing fortuitous events in his own life, and he points out that anyone having impact upon the lives of others must reckon with such variables as regional differences, personal resources, and accelerating change.

In 1966, as a beginning teacher in Rabun Gap, Georgia, Wigginton noted immediately the differences between his middle-class upbringing and that of local students. Born in West Virginia and reared in Athens, Georgia, where his father was a university professor, Wigginton was exposed to gardens, chickens, and pecan orchards but lacked the wider range of experiences, from ginseng collecting and bear hunting to automobile repair, which tended to make his students more self-sufficient.

Eliot Wigginton

Equally marked are the generational differences which he now encounters. "I know for a fact," he says, "that the vast majority of the hundred plus students I work with cannot define five percent of the hundred words on a worksheet I give them that lists traditional tools or artifacts --a 'quiz' on which their grandparents would score 100% and their parents 75%. Most cannot name a single Appalachian author or demonstrate the use of a tool or a skill or technique that their grandparents can. It's a fact that they do not have a perceived Appalachian identity." The identity they have comes, he says, from the particular peer group to which they choose to belong.

Although wary of making a value judgement, Wigginton admits that "deep down inside I think kids now, in terms of value systems, aspirations, thoughtfulness, reflectiveness, tend to be shallower, more superficial than the ones I worked with 20 years ago." Yet he is more optimistic today than he was in the 1960s, when "10 and 14-year-olds were vanishing off the streets and there was so much LSD, acid rock, and anti-social, self-destructive behavior." The problem now, he claims, is two-fold: (1) Young people have "absolutely no grounding in anything stable--like who you are, what heritage you come from or what it leads to"; and (2) "There is a basic acquisitiveness and greed that I've never seen before--not for the basic needs; they want *stuff* and they want it now. Like Jack-leg mountain kids driving new Camaros the instant they have their licenses."

"One of the things we've allowed to happen," he continues, "is the creation of a society where nothing lasts over six months--a food fad, a relationship, a belief. Unless we keep them from getting on a treadmill and being caught up in this constant flux we are courting disaster. If I were a parent of 12 to 15 year-olds I'd be in a state of confusion as to what to say and do. It's a tough time." As explanation of this description of the times Wigginton says, "I think people in this culture probably have less power than ever before. I can't think of any aspect of their external lives over which they have true control. It's all controlled by government, industries, media, educational systems they didn't create or endorse."

When pressed to suggest solutions to the problem Wigginton says, "There *are* strategies. I see a possibility for Appalachian people to make some creative compromises with these outside forces and still retain big chunks of what they value about their culture." He hastens to add, however, if Appalachian people elect the option of seeking compromise with the outside world they must arrive at strategies only after raising such questions as, "Where do we get the money to survive? To what extent are local people going to own the means and the resources that produce money? To what extent do people in this culture own the systems by which they produce? Conceivably those entities that generate income could be owned by local people, but they usually aren't," Wigginton observes. "At the moment the majority here are not actively looking at options and seeking means but are waiting for outside parties to come in and save them."

Having chosen education as his way of addressing the future, Wigginton sees as his challenge the same one set forth by Socrates: since a lack of perspective is "part and parcel of being young, what we have to wrestle with as adults are ways to lift them out of themselves, get them up into the air to see where they came from the shape of the landscape." The next step is to devise strategies whereby those who think that they have nothing to offer will see, not only that they *can* contribute, but also that they have an *obligation* to add to the quality of life for others. To be effective, the technique must be geared to local conditions. "The important thing," he says, "is to place youth in situations in which they will get the message for themselves instead of having it given to them."

Like all good educators Wigginton is continually refining his own technique, which he devised originally as a means of giving his students something to write about. Young people who were not interested in writing about anything reacted positively when put face-to-face with an older person who had perspective and was non-judgmental. Wigginton warns, however, that "if kids elevate the past to an exalted position they have missed the point." Admittedly irritated when teachers subvert the process by stopping with a product, a magazine, Wigginton emphasizes that the interview is merely the entry point, a way of engaging the students' attention and getting them to look at what they had not seen before. "It is one spot of color on what should become a quilt with color and pattern." The lesson is not complete until young people ask, "What does this information tell us about the future, the values we ought to carry around with us, those other cultures that we tend to

Insights Continued

suspect?"

"Presumably the future will be saner," Wiggington says, "if we can help them develop relationships that are not superficial."

Wigginton maintains contact with a large number of youth in his program, and several hundred of them have also been questioned by a major evaluator. According to their responses the Foxfire method is valuable because it treats young people with respect, allows them to make mistakes without becoming failures and gives a sense of balance to life. Almost all identified as a major ingredient the choice of community as subject matter, with the result that youth get the reinforcement derived from being involved in what is widely perceived by the community as worth doing.

The lives of countless teachers, Wigginton finds, are circumscribed by their feeling that they have no flexibility and choice, that their state's essential skills list can be taught only in traditional ways. In workshops, therefore, he shows them that other strategies are not only fun but possible. Their response, he notes, is "excitement-for suddenly they are liberated, seeing that the rest of their lives is not going to be pinched off by a narrow dictatorial list of bits and pieces of academic trivia. Lots of other methods include, but go beyond, what they are mandated to teach into some substance, some real discussions and understandings." Also he demonstrates a number of teaching strategies which he has found successful.

Currently Wigginton is conducting summer workshops in three centers, at Berea, Georgia State, and North Georgia college, where he has experienced teachers examining curricular design and considering "ways we can look at a situation and get kids to look at bigger things." Over the next four or five years he hopes to develop a network of teachers who will continue to learn and trade ideas, building up a sense of energy in the region. What he does then depends upon the success of these experiments. "I can't do it all; I'm just one person," he says. "*If* it looks good, if good things seem to be happening, then the work in eastern Kentucky, for example, could provide a model to take to other parts of the country."

With characteristic care in suggesting provisos Wigginton hastily cautions, "I don't have some sort of global plan. I'm not going to be put in the position of saying all teachers should do this. We're just tinkering with a formula that seems to engage kids and still meet state requirements."

This formula allows for cultural change. For example, oral history *per se*, which he sees as a means of looking at what was happening at a certain place and point in time and what that led to, may not be needed in 2050 as it is now to fill gaps in the records of 80 years ago. With more data than ever before being recorded about the 1980s, Wigginton says, "I can't think of much of anything that future historians will not be able to figure out from material being saved." Conversely, he hopes, oral narratives and journals will always be important. "We will really be in trouble if we get to the point where we believe that every individual does not have a cluster of insights and experiences of value to share." Drawing upon an indigenous Appalachian culture, however, is only one of the hundreds of ways to get youth wrestling with aspirations and values. "That's the trap people constantly fall into," Wigginton states emphatically. "If teachers don't read Book II of *Sometimes A Shining Moment* they miss the whole point."

Another cultural change affecting technique is more difficult to anticipate. "It may be a fact that the world we're creating now will prevent Appalachian kids from having the choice of staying in the mountains; it may be that when they're 45 or 50 they will all be living in Atlanta." All we can do, therefore, is to "hope that they will carry enough of our culture with them to give them strength and memories."

Sometimes a Shining Moment *is reviewed on page 33 of this issue*

A True Yard by the Nose

Growing up, I used to think
she smelled the inches in a yard
of calico
stretched from fingertip to nose.
The salt cupped grainy in her palm
a miracle, gauged from flesh
that knew from years
how half a teaspoon felt.
A dash of this,
a lump of that—
a pinch of soda
between forefinger and thumb,
enough to raise the biscuits
high and light.
Grandmother taught me to sew and cook
with a measuring tape and graduated spoons,
but they rest idle in a drawer—
my nose has learned to smell
as true a yard as hers.

-- Bettie M. Sellers

...from Golden Days

Anna Mae Murr Reams of Johnson City, Tennessee, is nicknamed Annie Oakley because she competes--and wins--at turkey shoots. (At turkey shoots, the competitors aim at targets, not turkeys.) She was born in 1909 in Telford, Tennessee "in a log cabin about 10 miles from Davy Crockett's birthplace." She was interviewed in 1980 by Carl Ingram, an ETSU student who was attending Davy Crockett High School at that time.

"My mother and father always said I should have been a boy. I used to go hunting with my older brothers and carry the game. When I became a teenager, I started hunting and fishing myself. My mother went coonhunting when she was a girl, but she never did use a gun. She would set traps to catch quail and rabbits. I took my mother fishing to Watauga Lake when she was 90 years old--she died when she was 92.

"My favorite pastime was hunting and still is. Now that I have a little age on me and been in failing health for the last few years, I don't get to go out over rugged terrain any more but I attend the local turkey shoots every opportunity I get. This is where I was pegged the name of Annie Oakley. Last year, I brought home 12 turkeys, a pork loin, five hams and 52 pounds of meat. This year, I have brought home seven turkeys, seven hams and six pounds of cube steak. I love guns which stems from my upbringing. I remember when the men in the family would take the muzzle loader (hog rifle) that was made in 1844--just like the gun Daniel Boone used. I also have a .22 rifle, a 16 gauge single and a 16 gauge pump and a 12 gauge pump.

This is an excerpt from one of the **Golden Days** *oral history projects. For more information turn to page 37*

Physical for my Son

I took you to the clinic today,
Somewhere between school and dinner-time,
With my jaws tight, my fists clenched,
Until the lab tests came in lintless white coats
And punctured a finger on your grubby left hand
And invited me into your inner ear,
The otoscope bringing me breathless
Into a chamber I had not before known,
And I was aware that you, having lived inside me,
Know somewhere more than I'll ever know about you.
I found myself reaching
When the technician with sterile and manicured fingers
Finally washed off the slides in the stainless steel sink.
I wanted somehow to save your blood.

--Barbara Smith

Tossing the Bouquet

For Christmas
When she was five,
She got a baby doll
With lots of little baby clothes to change
And a bottle to drink and wet.
She walked straight out into the kitchen,
Stepped down on the pedal
That flipped up the lid on the garbage can,
And threw the doll in.
She wanted a cowboy suit.

In August
When she was twenty-five
She went to South Carolina
To swelter in panty hose
And a bridesmaid's dress
In the wedding of a woman
She didn't even like.
Right after the reception,
She stopped at a gas station
To change into jeans.
She saw a big trash barrel
Full of used crankcase oil,
Tossed in her bridesmaid's flowers
And smiled while they slowly sank
Down through the dirty oil.

--Pat Verhulst

Where Home Is

"You've got a beautiful home here," the plumber said.

Funny how I'd never thought of it as home.

Home was down by the springhouse
where I trapped waterdogs in Prince Albert cans
because I never really believed
they purified the water.

Home was in the barn
where on autumn days I breathed
curing tobacco and horse manure
sweeter than the Evening in Paris cologne
that Ernie Davenport gave me
when he drew my name at Christmas
in seventh grade.

Home was in the tobacco patch
where I wabbled on black mud heels
to fill another coal bucket with tobacco plants
and laid them out in perfect rows
so Daddy wouldn't scold.

It must be that some of that
evening in the barnyard fragrance
fastened itself to the upholstery
of my Duncan Phyfe couch.

Or maybe the tobacco patch mud
never quite bleached out
of the laundry.

Possibly waterdogs have spirits
that peered up at the plumber
from the waterpipes.

Memories sit down to chat
in my little brick ranch.

Memories rise up in laughter
loud enough to drown the traffic
on the interstate in my backyard.

--Gretchen McCroskey

The Ballad of Corey Brown

Oh this is the tale of poor Corey Brown
A tale not for the weird or the weak
A lever was pulled and a dumpster fell down
And Corey would nevermore speak

Corey was but an honest, bright lad
He was tanned from his toes to his head
A finer boy there was ne'er to be had
But now poor Corey is dead

Roger the trashman was not a bad guy
He was clothed head to foot all in green
But when Corey's true love told Roger good-bye
Roger turned suddenly mean

With rational thought set completely aside
The weirdo went out in his truck
He intended to give Corey's true love a ride
And from her, her good life to pluck

He closed on his target with speed of gazelle
He lifted his dumpster up high
Corey's true love was tired and fell
There was a strange gleam in his eye

Then Corey stepped into the path of the truck
He rised his arms upward and said:
"The weirdo must have just a little more pluck
If he wishes to see my love dead!"

The maniac stated, "but surely you see,
Your checks would all soon be cashed."
"There is nothing that I wouldn't do," said he
And with those words, Corey was mashed.

Corey was but an honest, bright lad
He tanned from his toes to his head
But he messed with a man who was clearly
QUITE MAD
And now poor Corey is dead.

--Dan Puckett

...from Golden Days

Florence Long Powell of Johnson City, was born in 1930 in Knoxville. She was interviewed by Fred Powell.

Home - "It was a two story brick house close to the University of Tennessee. Knoxville was a city made up of people connected with the University of Tennessee, TVA and later, Oak Ridge."

Toys - "We had Indian servants who made us bows and arrows and Indian objects. Servants made dolls, doll houses and outdoor toys."

Home remedies - "My father was the first heart doctor in this area. Therefore we did not have any home remedies in our house."

Recipes - "All the food was prepared by servants who had the right to cook what they wanted. This was a practice followed for several generations."

APPALACHIAN CHILDHOOD

WPA (Works Progress Administration) nursery. Taken by Lewis Hine for the National Research Project, 1936-37.

Courtesy of the National Archives, Lewis Hine Collection

Courtesy of the Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University

Courtesy of the Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University.

Courtesy of the National Archives, Lewis Hine Collection

This young boy worked from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. as a driver in Brown Mine, Brown, West Virginia. The photo was made by Lewis Hine in 1908 for the National Child Labor Committee.

NOW AND THEN

Alice Anthony

Joyce Duncan

Michael Smith

Larry Smith. Courtesy of University Relations. East Tennessee State University

(Left) Mall, Johnson City, Tennessee, 1987. (Above) At the Early Childhood Development Center, ETSU.

Soul Train Ride

Judy Odom

The summer Bonnie turned thirteen, her daddy took away her record player and threw all her Elvis 45's and LP's in the garbage can. "Elvis Presley," he raged. "Greasy, long-hair good-for-nothing. I don't want you listening to that trash he sings. It's restless music. Bound to make a young girl's heart deep-down dissatisfied."

Bonnie cried, of course, and locked herself inside her bedroom, where she spent the next two hours writing 20 angry pages in her diary. Some day, she resolved, she'd find a place to live where she'd have all the restless music that she needed. She would stay up late and drink beer and say damn and hell a lot and throw wild parties. She would travel all round the world and learn to play guitar and maybe start a rock band of her own. One thing sure --she wouldn't stay in Birmingham and settle down into a dull safe job the way her daddy had.

He drove a train inside Republic Steel Mill -- stayed behind the big wire fence and didn't go from town to town. The railroad tracks he traveled made a circle from the roundhouse through the plant and back again. For 20 years -- since 1937 -- he had passed the fidgeted until he set her on the ground.

"She's just like you, Tom. Real feisty. No doubt who her daddy is," his buddies all agreed. "She loves that ol' engine, dudd'n she?"

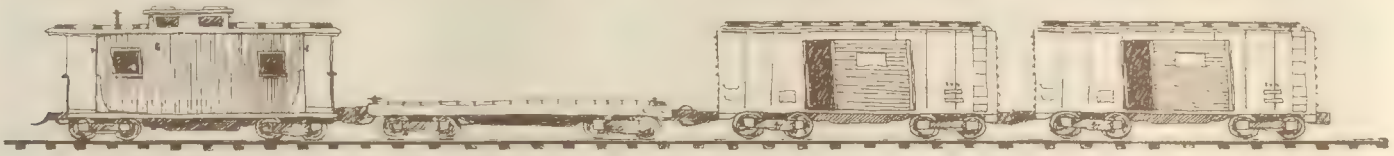
"Yessir, boys," her daddy nodded proudly. "She's her daddy's girl." He reached for Bonnie's hand.

She smiled up at him. "That's right. I'm my daddy's girl," she said.

But now that she was 13, being called her daddy's girl no longer pleased her. Shared blood, she'd decided, didn't necessarily make people kin. Maybe she'd inherited her daddy's blue eyes and his thick eyelashes, but she didn't see the world the way he did.

They argued over Elvis and her hairstyle, over lipstick, clothes, her friends, the books she read. The two of them hurled angry words like forked lightning at each other, and Bonnie's mother had to serve as lightning rod.

"He loves you, precious," she told Bonnie. "Daddy wants to raise you right is all. You know he had to raise himself -- no mama and a shiftless rambling daddy who'd disappear for months on end. I tell you -- it hurts my heart to think about your daddy's people



same blast furnances and slag piles every day.

At least he got to wear a red bandana and a railroad cap. He could've blown the whistle any time he wanted. Bonnie thought that might be fun. Her daddy didn't like the whistle, though. He said it had a lonesome sound. When Bonnie asked how fast the train would go, he couldn't tell her. "Open up the throttle and you'd jump the tracks," he said. "You'd prob'ly turn the engine over. If you wrecked, you'd spill hot pig iron everywhere."

When she was little, he had taken her out to Republic with him every payday. Her mother always dressed her in a frilly Sunday pinafore. Clinging to her daddy's hand, she'd skipped along beside him to the commissary where he got his check cashed. All the lady clerks had bragged on her nice dress and curly hair. Her daddy let her have an orange crush and a five-cent pack of Oreos. The commissary had a spicy smell like Christmas. Bonnie loved the cheerful tapping noise her Sunday shoes made on the rough unpolished wooden floor.

Before they went back to the car, her daddy always took her by the roundhouse and showed her off to any of his buddies who might be at work that day. They'd lift her up inside the cab of a big locomotive, and she'd pretend that she was driving off alone on some exciting journey -- to Sleeping Beauty's castle or the Land of Oz. Her daddy waved at her like she was really leaving, like he really meant to let her go. But then, before her train had time to get good started, he would call her back again. He'd help her down and hug her hard. "Well, hey -- I missed you, baby," he'd say, laughing. "Idd'n this the finest part of any train ride -- coming home?"

"Daddy, it's not over," she would answer. "I'm not ready to get off the train." She'd wriggle in his arms. He held her too tight, and the whiskers that had started sprouting since he shaved that morning scratched her cheek like tiny pins. Mingled with cigar smoke, the aroma of his Mennen after-shave was overpowering. She

passing him around the way they did — like he was some stray puppy dog. You think about that Bonnie. How'd you like it --growing up that way? Nobody loving you enough to keep you six months at a stretch or try to teach you right from wrong?"

Bonnie scowled, but didn't answer. She couldn't say what she was thinking - that living without rules or relatives sure sounded fine.

The third week in July, the Ritz Theater downtown started showing Elvis's new movie, "Loving You." As soon as Bonnie's daddy saw the ad, he put the Ritz off limits. So she convinced her best friend Mary Laura Taylor they should sneak off to the Tuesday matinee. Bonnie's daddy would be working and her mother would be at her Tuesday afternoon canasta party. Bonnie figured she could make it back home with an hour to spare.

The girls got to the Ritz without a problem, and they had a satisfying afternoon. They shared three Hershey bars and one tub of hot buttered popcorn, and they squealed at Elvis till their throats were sore. Nobody guessed what they had done till three days later, when Bonnie's daddy overheard her telling Susie Burns the whole plot of the movie on the telephone.

He didn't scream and wave his arms around. He didn't spank her. All he did was sentence her without a trial to life in solitary till he started trusting her again. "No going out to parties or a ball game on the weekends," he told Bonnie softly. "No sitting with us in the living room to watch TV," he said. His voice was like the silence at the center of a hurricane. "You might as well bring me your radio," he added. "Looks like I'm gon' have to throw it in the garbage, too. I can't let you keep on listening to that filthy Elvis Presley. You gon' be stained too deep for cleansing, pretty soon. It's like my Aunt Velma always warned me -- 'You lay down with the dogs, you bound to catch some fleas.'"

Alone in her room after supper, Bonnie heard her daddy

laughing at Red Buttons on TV. She wondered how long she could stand it, being isolated like the victim of some horrible disease.

Honestly, she thought, I might as well have polio. I wish I did. I wish I hadn't let them give me that ol' Salk vaccine.

She had a good time for a little while pretending she was paralyzed or dying. Her daddy would be sorry then. He'd cry and hold her hand. He'd rush out to the store and buy her all the Elvis records he could carry. He might even get her a brand new hi-fi.

If Elvis heard about her suffering, he would prob'ly call or come to see her. That would be the very least he'd want to do for such a brave and loyal fan.

Bonnie started searching through her desk for stationery, but nothing that she found was beautiful enough for writing Elvis on. She was about to cry. Then she remembered -- she wasn't dying anyhow.

To make herself feel better, she got out the Elvis pictures she kept hidden in an empty Kotex box inside her closet. She giggled to herself. Her daddy never would look there. She shuffled through the pictures ... Elvis with his mother and that fine pink Cadillac he bought her ... Elvis on the set of "Loving You" ... The newest one she had showed Elvis at the mansion he'd just bought in Memphis ... Graceland ... what a pretty name.

Sometime late that night, she woke up. Lying in the dark, she thought about the trouble she was in. Far off in the still, hot air, she heard the whistle of a train. Bonnie smiled and yawned. She'd

have to talk to Mary Laura. Her daddy hadn't said she couldn't use the phone.

"I'm real sorry. I can't do it," Mary Laura said when Bonnie called her. "I mean -- girl, you know I want to. It'd be real exciting. I love Elvis same as you, and well -- we are best friends and all. But see, I got my twirling class tomorrow, Bonnie. How am I gon' be a majorette if I miss twirling class? You ever hear of any majorette that couldn't twirl baton?" she whined.

"No. I never did," admitted Bonnie. "It's okay."

I'll do it by myself, she thought, and poked her lower lip out. Let ol' Mary Laura stay at home and twirl that damn baton. I don't need her along.

That night, soon as she could hear her daddy snoring, Bonnie got up quick and silent as a pulsebeat. She tiptoed to her desk and rummaged for the flashlight she had hidden in the bottom drawer. By its cheery yellow beam, she tumbled clothes into the knapsack she had used at Baptist Youth Camp back in June. She put her Elvis pictures in on top, and then her diary. Then she strapped the knapsack tight. Hurriedly, she dressed in jeans, a dark blue shirt, and tennis shoes. Around her neck, she tied a red bandana she had borrowed from her daddy's bureau drawer that afternoon.

She had 10 dollars and some change that she'd been saving. With the money safely tucked into her pocket, she went over to the window and unlatched the screen. She left some footprints and a few crushed flowers in her mother's zinnia bed.

The neighborhood slept peaceful in the summer darkness. All the houses had their curtains shut, and every morning glory on Miss Barker's trellis had closed up till dawn. No lights burned except the street lamps. They made soft bright circles on the pavement. Bonnie stayed back in the shadows. She padded through the grass as quiet as the rustle of a midnight wind. The crickets were awake and singing to her. She matched the rhythm of her footsteps to their happy traveling song.

The nearest railroad tracks that Bonnie knew of crossed North McDonald Street a few blocks past the junior high. She walked the distance in an hour. The lighted clock inside the window of the Dixie Esso Station read 11 minutes after one. The place was locked up tight. She put a quarter in the coke machine; it gave her too much change.

Smiling, Bonnie took her drink out back and sat down in the shadow of the building. Any minute now, a freight train would come by and Bonnie Pearson would be Memphis bound.

For an hour or more, she sat and waited. Then she heard the whistle and the rattle of the wheels. The red lights at the crossing signalled to her and the bells were ringing "Hurry!" Bonnie scrambled to her feet and ran. An open gondola was passing. She grabbed the third rung of its ladder with both hands and pulled herself aboard.

The best that she could tell, she'd hopped a slow freight rolling westward. If she had hit it lucky, pretty soon the tracks would angle north toward Tennessee.

And if they didn't? Bonnie asked herself and laughed. She didn't really care. Some way or another, she would get to Memphis sometime. Right now, all that mattered to her was to keep on traveling.

The gondola had low sides that came to her shoulder. Standing up, she could see all the darkened houses and the trees and shadows as they drifted by.

The steady rocking of the train was making Bonnie sleepy. She slipped her knapsack off and set it on the gritty floor. At least, she thought, the gondola was empty. You wouldn't rest much on a load of coal. Bonnie yawned and stretched out with her knapsack for a pillow. She could hear the train wheels singing "El-vis, El-vis, El-vis" as she closed her eyes.

Bonnie woke confused at dawn. The train had stopped. A man in greasy overalls was balanced on the ladder yelling at her. "Get up, girl," he shouted. "What the hell you think you doing? Who give you permission to be sleeping in this car?" He turned around and motioned to somebody Bonnie couldn't see. "Rick! Hey, Rick!" he called. "Get over here. Look what I found!" He swung himself into the car, grabbed Bonnie's arm, and yanked her to her feet. "Good thing I come along," he growled. "Another couple minutes you'd been sleeping under 50, 60 tons of coal." He jerked his thumb over his shoulder. Bonnie saw the coal chute waiting for her down the line.

She rubbed the sleep out of her eyes and mumbled, "What town is this? Where'd I get to? Memphis? Is this Memphis, Tennessee?" The sun was rising on her right, she noticed. Maybe that meant she had traveled north all night.

"Lord God, Joe!" a deep voice bellowed. Another man in overalls was standing on the ladder now. He stared at Bonnie. "Jesus save us -- it's a little girl."

"Girl or boy don't make no never-mind," Joe grumbled. "It's a hobo, Rick. And hoboes is against the law. There ain't no free rides on the L & N."

Wide awake now, Bonnie saw that she was stranded in a freight yard at the edge of some big city. In the distance, she could see tall buildings rising toward the sky. Somewhere close by, Elvis waited for her on the steps of Graceland. Once they heard her story, Rick

and Joe would surely have to let her go.

"Look, I'm not a hobo, Mister." Bonnie stood up taller and gave Joe her sweetest smile. "The thing is -- why I'm on this freight train -- I was kidnapped. Last night, I escaped," she improvised. "See, Elvis Presley -- I'm his sister." Behind her back, she crossed her fingers to excuse the lie.

Well, anyhow, she thought, I nearly am. The way I love his music, I sure ought to be.

"They kidnapped me for ransom," she went on. "A million dollars. Elvis would've paid it, too, except I got away." She glanced at Rick and let her bottom lip start trembling. Rick wouldn't like to see her cry.

Joe had started choking like a man that had the whooping cough. Rick hushed him with a frown. "Well, Miss Presley," he spoke solemn and respectful. "Hate to tell you, but you ain't in Memphis. You still got a ways to go," he said. "This here is Atlanta, darlin'. You in Atlanta now. We best walk on over to the office, don't you reckon? The yardmaster -- Mr. Jenkins -- we'll ask him to call your brother Elvis on the telephone."

Mr. Jenkins raised his eyebrows at her story, but he smiled at Bonnie. "This young lady's wore out, boys," he said to Rick and Joe. "She's covered head to foot in coal dust. I bet she's hungry, too. Rick, you show her where the bathroom is," he ordered. "Let her wash up, maybe change her clothes. Joe, run buy this child some breakfast at the diner. Tell Virginia I said put it on my tab."

He turned to Bonnie. "That okay with you, Miss Presley? We'll call your brother after while. I hope you got his private number, honey. Big star like he is -- so many fans and everything -- without that private number, ain't no operator in the world gon' put you through. You know that, don't you, little girl?"

Bonnie nodded, realizing she'd been outmaneuvered. "Could I have two chili dogs?" she asked. "And french fries? I'm about to starve. Get me a large coke, please. And if they have it, I might take a slice of lemon icebox pie."

When Daddy gets ahold of me, she thought, I'll have to live on bread and water for a year or two. I might as well eat hearty while I can.

After breakfast, Mr. Jenkins made the phone call for her. Bonnie gave him the right number, and she told him everything. She had hoped her daddy might be working, but naturally, he'd stayed at home. "We got the po-lice searching for her now," he said. "She's near 'bout run her mama crazy, Mr. Jenkins. What? ... Well, no. I rather not speak to her. I'm too mad. You keep her there. I'll come and get her quick as I can catch a train."

The Golden Flyer made the trip from Birmingham the fastest. That would be the train her daddy came on, Mr. Jenkins said. Count a taxi to the station and another taxi to the freight yard, and Bonnie could expect him about noon.

While she waited, Mr. Jenkins told her, she could help him run the office. He would show her how to switch a freight from track to track. If she wanted to, he'd even let her take a short ride on a locomotive. Rick would be real glad to show her all the buttons and the gadgets in the cab.

"Thank you," Bonnie answered. "I been knowing all about a locomotive since I was a baby almost," she said proudly. "Daddy showed me. He's a locomotive engineer."

"A locomotive engineer? Is that right?" Mr. Jenkins chuckled. "Well, that means you born to be a rambler, child. It's in your blood if you the daughter of a railroad man," he said, and nodded like he'd learned the answer to a puzzle. "You can call it what you will --that music you been chasing. But I bet if you asked him, you'd find out your daddy knows the song."

"Not him," Bonnie answered, laughing. "Not my daddy. I doubt he knows any songs at all. At least I never heard him sing one -- not since I been born."

Mr. Jenkins shrugged. "You have to listen careful, Bonnie. I'd say you ain't done much listening to your daddy the last couple years."

At 12:15 the office door swung wide, and Bonnie's daddy steamed in hotter than a locomotive's boiler. "Elvis Presley's sister!" he exploded. "Your own name and family -- they don't suit you any more?"

"You know it's not that Daddy." Bonnie did her best to pacify him. "I'm still proud to be a Pearson. But I can't stop loving Elvis. It's his music. That's what makes us kin. I'm Elvis Presley's sister in my soul." She turned for help to the yardmaster. "Mr. Jenkins here -- he said you'd understand. He said you had to know the songs I ran away for, 'cause you're a railroad man."

Her daddy clenched his fists. His face was burning redder. "Mr. Jenkins was mistaken. He's a meddling interfering fool." The words hissed out like steam escaping pressure.

Mr. Jenkins smiled at Bonnie. He did what he could to calm her daddy down. "Just hold on, Mr. Pearson," he said. "Take it easy, now. I know you're mad. I know you been real worried. But fussing at this child won't help -- the both of y'all could stand to do some listening for a change." With one hand on her arm, he guided Bonnie closer to her daddy. "She's your daughter, Mr. Pearson. I believe it's time you took her home."

Bonnie and her daddy didn't say much to each other in the taxi. She could tell he was still struggling to keep calm. His lips were pressed together like two steel rails joined by welding. Bonnie wondered if he'd ever talk to her again. Maybe, she decided, life might run a little smoother if he didn't. She leaned her head against the taxi window and listened to the tires hum.

Finally, they were settled in a pullman on the Golden Flyer, with Bonnie in the window seat to watch the view she'd missed by traveling in the dark. They passed hotels and parks and office buildings. Blurred by speed and distance, everything that Bonnie saw looked beautiful and clean.

Her daddy cleared his throat, and Bonnie turned to face him. "I'm not denying that I was a rambler for awhile," he told her shyly. "I rode the rails, you know. I hopped a freight one night just like you did. I wadd'n running after anybody's music, though."

He took a deep breath. Bonnie leaned in closer to him. She was listening hard. "I didn't have no choice," he said. "I didn't have no choice about the matter, really. My Aunt Velma -- I was staying with her then -- she kicked me out. Said I was old enough to find a job, quit living off my relatives. Hell, it was 1933. There wadd'n any jobs for grown men, let alone a kid who'd barely turned 16."

"But what about your daddy?" Bonnie asked. "Your daddy should've helped you."

"My daddy wadd'n anywhere around," he shrugged. "I couldn't count on him for anything. And so I took off -- hopped a freight like

I was saying. I hoboed all around this country. It wadd'n any fun. There wadd'n no nice Mr. Jenkinses around to buy me cokes and chili dogs," he grinned. "In 1937," he continued, "I come south again and lucked into that locomotive engineering job out at Republic. It's just by accident," he said, "that I'm a railroad man. That spring, I met your mama. I was glad to settle down. I wanted to be in a family, Bonnie. Family music -- that's the finest music I know of. It's steady voices blending in together, making one sweet peaceful song."

He leaned his head back on the gray plush seat and closed his eyes. "That Elvis Presley, now -- well, girl, you got to pick your music for yourself, I reckon. Just 'cause I'm your daddy, that don't mean I get to pick the music that you hear."

His face looked older in the sunlight. The wrinkles underneath his eyes looked like a map of railroad lines. Bonnie hadn't ever noticed them before and wished she hadn't seen them now. Softly, hoping that he wouldn't hear her, she hooked her index finger through the loop and pulled the window shade.

Elvis Presley -- Graceland -- all those pretty places out the window -- they were calling to her with their music. She would see them all one day and listen to their songs. She had a lot of time.

"I love you, Daddy," Bonnie whispered, and pressed her cheek against his arm.

Another hour or two and they'd be home in Birmingham. Their traveling together would be over soon. But for a little while, here on the Golden Flyer, they were moving like one person to the music that the train wheels made.

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...from **Golden Days**

Alfred Dana Bowman of Johnson City, Tennessee, was born in 1909 in Butler (the town that was covered with water by the TVA in the making of Lake Watauga in 1949). He was interviewed by Rebecca I. Bright of Jonesborough.

Home - "He had his own room with a fireplace in it, a very comfortable place to live. It was a country house of eight rooms which he said was a pretty good size back in that day and time. 'It was a dandy house.' "

Home town - "Everything in the world almost. It was out in the country and about the only place we had to gang up was at the old country store and after everybody got out of the cornfield long enough they all went to the country store and told jokes. Everybody would carry their rifles with them and shoot snakes, that's when I was a boy."

Events - "The biggest thing we had was related to the church. It was our church association which lasted three days. And every time there was a fifth Sunday in a month there would always be some church have a fifth Sunday meeting and everybody would gather up and take dinner and put it on the ground and have the best time ever was. That was our entertainment, having dinner at the church ground. We didn't have anything else. Everybody had a good time."

*This is an excerpt from one of the **Golden Days** oral history projects. For more information turn to page 37.*

Zealots for Children

Pat Arnow

It's a national problem, the same everywhere. Children are abused, children are neglected.

There are no easy solutions, but Judith Hammond, an associate professor of sociology at East Tennessee State University, has started a program that tackles one aspect of the problem.

Dr. Hammond is an energetic, enthusiastic woman in her 30s. In her lap, her equally enthusiastic and energetic one-and-a-half-year old son, Matthew, plays with a nearby typewriter. When he squirms to be free, his mother lets him slide down, and he toddles confidently away. This cheerful family interaction is quite a contrast to the subject under discussion. Hammond is describing how a case of child abuse or neglect winds its way through the social service and court system.

She is telling how until a few years ago, when a case ended up in a courtroom, the voice speaking in the child's best interest was an attorney who was appointed "guardian ad litem" by the judge. Usually the attorney--who received a token fee for this service--spent just a few minutes before the hearing reviewing the case and getting advice from the child's social service worker. The attorney was then expected to make a recommendation in the best interest of the child.

Gloria Samuels, an attorney with a Legal Services of Upper East Tennessee, brought the issue to Hammond's attention. Samuels was seeing that the problems in these cases were bigger than most lawyers could handle. "Attorneys make a living by selling time and these cases are very time-consuming," she explains.

Hammond volunteered to take over the "guardian ad litem" position in a case in Unicoi County. In this role she could speak with the family, social workers, the school and the child. By learning as much as possible about the case she could make sure that the child would be placed in the best possible situation. She found that her involvement was meaningful, so she took on another case and recruited people in her department and other friends to do the same kind of work.

The volunteers' involvement was so effective that Hammond looked into developing a formal program. That is when she found that an organization with the structure she had in mind had recently come into existence. Her idea was one whose time had come all over the country. CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) had 205 chapters in 43 states. With a start-up grant from the federal government and support from the university and the Center or Appalachian Studies and Services, a CASA program serving Unicoi, Washington and Sullivan Counties opened offices at ETSU in July of 1985.

Now, with a full-time coordinator, Debbie Watson, and financial support from the local Junior League and the State of Tennessee, the program has become a vital service in neglect and abuse cases. Watson knows the ins and outs of the court system because she spent six years as a legal secretary in Bristol.

The abuse cases she and Hammond detail are complicated and sad. They share some facts from cases in the area: A mother is a prostitute and drug abuser. An 18-month-old infant's rectum is seriously inflamed, probably from the sexual abuse of a 12-year-old boy who was her baby sitter. A young girl has a sexually transmitted

disease that was probably given to her by her stepfather.

Neglect is far more prevalent than abuse, however, making up approximately 80% of all cases that come to the attention of officials--all over the country, not just in this region. Hammond defines neglect as a "failure to provide basic clothing, shelter, food and nurturance to a child. If children don't get those things then their rights are being violated." She and Debbie Watson recite some things they've seen in neglect cases: A 14-year-old girl has gingivitis and her teeth are falling out. A bright child flunks a grade because his mother doesn't send him to school regularly. At the last minute a mother changes her mind about moving, but she has already had the power board switch the electricity to the new place. She and her children spend a cold winter night in an unheated house. A baby is bitten from head to toe by insects while sleeping on a hillside. She was left there because her teenaged mother has an assignation with a lover.

Hammond emphasizes, "For a child to be removed from the home, something real serious has to be going on." In three out of four cases, the child does end up back in the home.

"Our goal is to reunite the family if there's any way at all that family can be reunited," says Watson. "We work with our community resources--with rehabilitation programs, counseling."

Even in the most severe cases, removing a child from the home is difficult, says Hammond. "It's a very painful process to take a child from natural parents, even parents who are abusive. The children will cry to be with their parents who just beat 'em with a hose."

Most parents of neglected or abused children have a problem with alcohol or drugs or both (though alcohol problems far outweigh other kinds of drug problems). And, if a parent was abused as a child, he or she is likely to become an abuser.

Unfortunately, abuse and neglect affect all regions of the country and all socioeconomic groups. "There's a stereotype that Appalachia reeks with sexual abuse and physical abuse and I really don't think so. I don't think we have a unique problem. Family violence affects all social classes and all subcultures," says Hammond.

In fact, Hammond thinks that the strong extended families that characterize this region are a real strength for the children in these cases. "We are almost always able to find a relative as a resource so we don't have to put a child in foster care."

Older children are the greatest challenge. "People like to work with babies, but there aren't that many of those. It's real easy to place a three-month-old baby, but try placing a 12 year-old who has set his parent's car on fire," says Hammond.

A recent Tennessee law that channels those who are known as unruly children into the social service system rather than through the corrections system has increased the number of older children who need help. Hammond thinks the law has the right idea. "Kids that are violent, kids that commit juvenile delinquent acts often have a history of abuse and neglect. Do you punish them further by locking them away? Or do you treat them as kids who have been abused or neglected and need services?"

The CASA program is not equipped at present to take on all the "unrulies," but there are plans to expand to include these older children. A program to represent the children of divorcing parents in custody battles is also underway.

Volunteers have not been hard to recruit. "They trickle in and so do our cases," says Hammond. Since the program began, CASA has advocated in 217 cases.

"We train laypeople, housewives, professional people," says Watson. "After we are appointed by the judge our volunteers do an extensive home investigation of the allegations. They talk to parents, schoolteachers, neighbors, pastors, anybody that has any contact with this family that would know what the situation is--they go out and talk to them. They are the child's voice in court. They are the judge's eyes."

Each volunteer/advocate takes on a single case at a time. After the case has been through the court, the advocate continues to monitor the case until the child's home is secure and permanent.

The juvenile judges have been happy to have the CASA advocates to appoint. "This service is provided to the court for free," explains Hammond. "Here you've got zealots for children, each volunteer working one on one with a case. Who else is going to bother?"

For more information about the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program call Debbie Watson at 615-929-4370.

To report suspected child abuse or neglect call you local State Department of Human Services.

Parents Anonymous helps families who need support, referrals or information. They have a toll-free hotline at 1-800-356-6767 (for Tennessee).

Alice Anthony

Changes in their Lives

Pat Arnow

When David and Kaye Rudd brought their newborn son home from the hospital two and a half years ago, they knew something was wrong. Jeremy had seizures and just did not respond the way other infants did. The Neon, Kentucky couple took their baby to a specialist in Johnson City. The doctor painted a bleak picture. "He was so blunt. The way he talked we could have spent all the money in the world and we couldn't have helped him. He told us that we should concentrate on our two other kids," says Kaye Rudd.

They saw nowhere to turn in Eastern Kentucky. They knew there must be other handicapped children there, but they never saw them. And there certainly were no programs for handicapped babies. For older children there was a reading program at the Fleming-Neon school, but no other special facilities existed.

The Rudds felt that there was something they could be doing to help their son learn and they sensed that the sooner they began, the more Jeremy would progress.

They were right in thinking that immediate help would be the best course for Jeremy. Rebecca Isbell, the coordinator for early childhood education at East Tennessee State University says, "The earlier you can reach these children the more changes you can bring about in their lives." Dr. Isbell works with a program here for handicapped infants and toddlers. She explains that most pre-school programs are designed for children age three and over. For handicapped children, Isbell says, "three is too late. By the time they're three they're already far behind."

It wasn't until Jeremy was almost two that the Rudds found the Center for Early Childhood Learning at ETSU. To join the program, they moved to Johnson City, 90 miles from Neon. It wasn't an easy move. They weren't happy to be leaving their relatives and friends. Because they didn't own a car, they couldn't visit Kentucky very often. A more positive side to the move was that David was able to return to school, to study for a degree in geography at ETSU. The other two children, Melissa, seven and J.R., 11, were happy in their new school. And for Jeremy, the move has been especially productive.

Kaye describes Jeremy's progress. "When we first brought him over here, you could lay him down and that's where he would lay. He wasn't even rolling over. He wouldn't pay any attention to anyone, look at them, or take an interest in what they were saying. Now he will associate with people."

Jeremy, a charming blue-eyed blond, confirms her assessment of his newfound skills by gurgling happily, and grasping a foam ball that his father is rolling toward him.

Part of the program for Jeremy is exercising. David demonstrates how he manipulates and massages the child's body to build up and tone muscles. "We exercise two or three times a day, thing they showed us." He adds, "This program has helped us quite a bit. He has changed more than 100%."

The Rudds

The program that David and Kaye Rudd found for Jeremy is an uncommon one. Though working with handicapped babies has proved to be extremely effective, not many places in the United States have any services for handicapped infants and toddlers--especially outside of urban areas.

"We play the catch-up game--that's part of our business with these babies, to try to get development up to their age level," says Carolyn Overbay, facilitator of the special handicapped project at ETSU. She believes that every child deserves the opportunity to live as full and interesting a life as possible. "We are in the business of improving the quality of life," she says.

Overbay and other staff members of the early childhood learning program express great pride and enthusiasm about their business. They have developed a model program that is hosted by one of the university's Centers of Excellence. The intervention programs for handicapped babies is not their only model program. There is a pre-school program that includes both normally developing and handicapped children. "We do more integration of the significantly handicapped with normally developing kids than almost any other program in the country," says Wesley Brown, center director.

Besides providing child care, the center functions as a training ground for students from 13 different departments in the university. Research is another component. For instance, Dr. Brown has been preparing a fellowship application to study the implications of the heroic measures now often practiced in neonatal intensive care units. He wants to know how these medical miracles affect the sanctity of life and quality of life. "It's a new phenomenon based on intensive care medicine. It's one of the major phenomena of our time," says Brown.

Every day the staff of the center deals with children saved by medical miracles. These teachers answer questions about the implications delicately and thoughtfully. They prescribe no easy answers to complicated problems. They respond with action, conducting the business of improving the quality of life for children in the region.

Lessons from the Kids at Hanging Limb

Jennie Carter

Some time in the past, I am convinced, I was a highland lass or a granny woman. I was born and raised in the Bluegrass, but even a glimpse of the mountains stirs something deep inside me as nothing else. It's always been this way -- even as a child. While growing up, my favorite vacations were spent in the mountains, hiking on mountain trails and discovering secrets that only the mountains held.

After coming home from one of these trips, I learned from my grandfather that most of my ancestors had come from the East Tennessee mountains to Middle Tennessee before the Civil War. My grandfather, who was always the family historian and storyteller, was delighted with my love for the mountains. He stopped telling me "Battle of Nashville" stories and started telling me stories his grandmother had told him about the mountains. One of his favorite books was *Trail of the Lonesome Pine* by John Fox, Jr. He gave it to me when I was 13, and I still have it.

No one in my family was really surprised when I went to work in the mountains after college. I found a job in a poverty program that served seven mountain counties in Tennessee. Two months after coming to the mountains, I found another job -- teaching in a mountain school. It was at Hanging Limb in Overton County on the Cumberland Plateau. A dream that I had held in my heart for at least 10 years was coming true.

It was August, 1967. I was 22, weighed 96 pounds and had never been away from home alone except to live in a college dormitory across town. I had never had the full responsibility of a classroom, and had never heard of Appalachian Studies. Later, I heard that the principal told a teacher I wouldn't last two weeks at Hanging Limb.

But my students at Hanging Limb opened doors for me that had never even been cracked before. They changed my life and sent it off in the most pleasant possible direction. "The Nashville Cat," as my students called me, had been drawn to the mountains to help these children, but I turned out to be the one who was really helped. My values and my "hidden agenda" were really developed then, and they remain in place today.

The first day of school, 26 seventh graders came into my class. Their ages ranged from 11 to 16. There were 20 boys and six girls. Many of the boys were twice my size. They seemed amused that I was their teacher. The girls were shy, but curious. Not one child wore new school clothes for the first day of school.

I tried to assess where they were educationally, but I kept coming back to where they were socially and culturally -- who they were and what they thought of themselves. It became apparent quickly that they were fairly good math students. It was in language arts that there was real difficulty -- but was it really a difficulty? Almost every child in the class could tell fascinating stories. Some were beautiful, some sad, some so funny tears ran down my cheeks as I laughed. They all made their characters come alive. They made them real. But most of the children couldn't read and write at grade level.

These children were quick, too. They could play basketball and softball like no other children I'd ever seen. Their motor skills were fine. They were quick to find and point out a mistake, and they had good arguments when they thought they were right.

When I looked at their IQ scores, I knew these scores weren't right! Even my limited experience and education on testing told me immediately that these IQ tests weren't appropriate for these kids. They knew a million things that I didn't know, but they didn't know about elevators and not one child in class had ever seen a black person. Most had never dialed a telephone - and some had not seen television outside the school. How could what they knew be measured by tests made in California?

The children were eager to learn. I wanted to get them ready for high school -- to try to catch them up. The eighth grade teacher, whom my children would have the following year, kept insisting most of them "wouldn't go on to high school." I kept refusing to believe that. These children were bright. One could have held her own in a college classroom. I later learned many of my seventh graders didn't go on to high school. Since then I've learned a lot about the relation between teacher expectation and student performance. No wonder they didn't go on to high school. Their eighth grade teacher as well as many other teachers and probably many parents didn't expect them to.

Although my principal insisted I must "get through the books by the end of May," I didn't know how we'd get through the English book and the spelling book and Tennessee history book and the science book when at least half the class couldn't even read. I started writing down their stories. The students began to read them. We learned to spell the words from the stories. These were our vocabulary and English lessons. I frantically tried to find the words in our spelling book to justify my methods. Now, with 20 years of experience, I would have the confidence and wisdom to throw out the books -- and write our own. I would also have the wisdom to tell the principal and that eighth grade teacher to go to hell.

Soon I was hearing "Jack tales" for the first time in my life. On weekends in Nashville, I was in the Peabody library finding volumes of Jack tales and learning what oral tradition really was. I was also reading what little research there was on teaching mountain children.

While the children told me their Jack tales, I read them Mark Twain, Faulkner and even Hemingway. One of my favorite books was *The Dollmaker*, by Harriette Arnow. One day it occurred to me they'd really find *The Dollmaker* meaningful. That really worked, and soon my treasured copy of *Trail of the Lonesome Pine* was being loaned out, too. I started looking for every mountain story I could find. They were so excited by them. They related.

And they sang to me. One boy played a fiddle -- several played the "gittar." They taught me "Barbry Allen," and I taught them Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, and Peter, Paul and Mary songs. I even taught them songs from the *Sound of Music*. We sang every day.

As for Tennessee history, their tales of Indians and pioneering were alive and real. Someone always knew a related story about most chapters in our Tennessee history book. They knew all about Sgt. York, and one girl was a cousin of Cordell Hull. We were turning literature lessons and Tennessee history into Appalachian studies, and I didn't even know it.

One day, a girl asked me if I had been saved. That was when I decided we would study religion as a unit in Social Studies. Their misconceptions about Catholicism also drove me to it. I learned

from them the central place religion had in their lives. It was central because too many of them felt no matter what they didn't have, they always had Jesus. Being saved for most of them was of the utmost importance. What they couldn't get here, they'd get later in heaven. Heaven was vitally important because they believed they wouldn't get much of anything here. The joy of those children mixed with his philosophy of fatalism was overwhelming to me. This Methodist turned college student turned agnostic was softening up. Maybe there really is a God, I had started thinking. If these kids believe, maybe I had better, too.

As a requirement of my job, I had to visit every student's home. I was a little afraid. I had been warned that I would be treated with suspicion -- as an outsider -- but I was welcomed in every home, no matter what circumstances. Each child was proud that the teacher was visiting. Some children held my hand the whole time I was there and hugged me good-bye. Sometimes I had to park a distance from the house and walk up a steep hill or a worn path. The children always appeared from nowhere and proudly led me along. This was quite different from the behavior of the insecure adolescents I worked with in Nashville. The mountain children hadn't learned to be insecure about who they were -- yet. They knew many "outsiders" looked down on them, but for the most part they still felt good about being mountain children. One interesting thing was that those who had TV's didn't particularly find the *Beverly Hillbillies* funny. At the time, I was surprised, but in retrospect, I'm not.

Where I grew up, parents came to the school very frequently --some everyday. But at Hanging Limb only one parent ever visited my class. Except for attending ball games, parents weren't encouraged to come to school. I sensed a real separation between the community and school. I later read that many people in the mountains of Appalachia view the school system as being apart from rather than a part of the community.

The mother who did come wanted to tell me, "for the first time in nine years, (of her son's schooling) my boy wants to come to school." He was one of those who couldn't read. I found out that his mother could read well. So she and I worked together to teach her son to read. By the end of the year, he was reading on a sixth grade level. There was a happy mother and a happy boy.

Many other events colored that year for me. A school bus driver shot a parent when they got into an argument over coming up a creek bed to pick up the man's son. The children taught me the difference between laurel and rhododendron and about raising beans. I had a flat tire on the road, and one of my 16 year old seventh grade boys was there within five minutes to fix it. I never asked how he found out, and he never told me. The children were too proud to bring their lunches from home. If they didn't have money for lunch, they just didn't eat. Sponsors were found for those who couldn't afford lunch. Boys from fourth grade up were allowed smoking breaks. No lunch money -- but smoking breaks -- that was my first lesson and frustration in education policy.

Now it's 1987 and we have all grown up.

A boy I taught to dial a telephone for the very first time is now working for the telephone company!

At least two of the kids did go on to college. One is a medical technician and the other is in business in Nashville.

The girl who could have held her own in the college classroom dropped out after the eighth grade. Her mother made her quit. She still reads everything she can get her hands on, and I bet she never makes her children quit school.

Some of the kids left the mountains and went to nearby towns. I heard of one who is very successful in a middle management position. He comes back to the mountains to preach on weekends.

Many of those children stayed on the mountain and raised their families there. And believe me; that's not a bad place to be.

I'm still in education, but I work in education policy, trying to make schools better -- especially schools where mountain children go. That's "my hidden agenda" that I spoke about earlier -- trying to make schools better for mountain children. Earlier this very week, I had one of the best moments of my life. Two mountain schools were among the "Ten Great Schools" named in Tennessee. There are lots of mountains in Tennessee and lots of mountain schools. It's time mountain schools get some recognition because many of them are producing fine results. These days in the mountains, we know a lot more about self concept, learning expectation, Appalachian studies and other factors that will make school a more successful experience for mountain children. Many mountain schools still need a lot of help. That's why "my hidden agenda" remains in place.

Kenneth Murray. From ***Portrait of Appalachia*** *published by Appalachian Consortium Press. © Kenneth Murray. Used by permission.*

Growing Up on Puncheon Fork Creek

Della Tipton Brittain

I was born on March 20, 1903, in a two-room house on the banks of Puncheon Fork Creek in Upper Laurel. One of the rooms was an original log house. The other room was built of rough lumber for a kitchen and was attached to one end of the log house under a shed-off roof. There was no ceiling under the roof of the kitchen. It was necessary to enter either room by a separate door from the porch, as no opening was cut between the two rooms. A rock chimney with fireplace provided the heating unit for the log (living) room, and the step-stove for cooking was the only method provided for heat in the kitchen.

My parents, Yance and Maggie Tipton, were tenant farmers on the mountainsides up and down that creek, and I was second of their nine children.

Papa rose very early in the morning, made a fire in the fireplace and in the kitchen stove. Mamma prepared breakfast, which was served about five a.m. We could hear the coffee mill as she ground coffee for breakfast. All of the children, with the exception of the nursing baby, were aroused to dress and eat together. By that time the baby was usually awake to partake of his different breakfast too. Menu was biscuits or corn bread, butter, hog meat of some kind, gravy, coffee, and sometimes jelly.

For midday meal we had corn bread, sometimes hog meat, vegetables--potatoes, beans, etc., usually coffee, and probably a family pie of apples, blackberries or strawberries. For supper we had milk and corn bread. On extremely cold evenings Mommy made mush, corn meal and water cooked over the fire in the fireplace. It was served with milk in the living room, thus sparing us the dreaded experience of eating in the cold kitchen. All of this food was cooked as no one but my mother could do it.

Mamma made all of our clothes, including Papa's shirts made of chambray, his underwear, her shimmies and our drawers of domestic, our petticoats of outing flannel, and our coats of woolen materials. From newspapers given to us by our landlord's wife, Mamma cut patterns for dresses, which were usually made of gingham, and did an expert job of fitting. This was done by hand until around the year 1911, when Mamma ordered a Sears, Roebuck sewing machine, which is still in our family. She also carded and spun wool into yarn and knitted our stockings, socks, and gloves. Practically all of this was done in the log room during the winter.

All of us slept in the one room where we had three of four beds, kept our clothes, entertained visitors and dressed.

From early childhood we were taught to help by carrying in stovewood, carrying water in a small bucket, sweeping the porch and kitchen, running errands, and washing dishes. This last chore none of us liked and when we quarreled with each other about who washed and who wiped the dishes, it was arranged that each of the three oldest girls would do it once a day. I was fortunate to receive breakfast time and did not have to dread it all day long.

Another of our responsibilities was to climb the mountain pasture and drive the cows down for milking. It seemed that the cows always tried to reach the highest point just at milking time. Old Bess was the worst. When Bess saw us coming she knew exactly why we were there, but she would not budge an inch until we clambered all the way to her. She picked grass as if it would be her last mouthful.

Our playtime consisted of strong imagination and excessive make-believe. There were no toys available in the stores. We broke branches from pine, laurel, and ivy and stuck them in the ground as perimeter for playhouses. We hunted broken pieces of tableware for our dishes. We used rocks for tables and chairs, and small sticks of wood for dolls. Often we gave ourselves names of attractive and popular young ladies in the community.

We believed without question that Santa Claus came down the chimney carrying in his pack the candy, Long Tom chewing gum, tablet and pencil, and the "once-a-year" big yellow orange sticking out of each stocking. We also never doubted that the doctor brought the new baby in his saddlebags, that the cows dug the baby calves from the ground in the stable or from a hollow log. On one occasion when we drove the cows down, one of the frisky heifers was releasing some of her energy by playing in the loose dirt where grass had washed away. I felt wise in observing her and exclaimed: "She's looking for a calf! She's looking for a calf!" I did not see anything funny about that, but I resolved not to be so smart if it caused mysterious and embarrassing laughter.

In August of the year 1912, a very damaging hail storm swept through this little valley by Puncheon Fork Creek, destroying much of the growing corn crop, vegetables and apples. The storm killed little chickens even when the mother hen tried to shelter them under her wings. This destruction discouraged my father, and he decided to listen to the advice of some of his relatives and move to Buncombe County, where they were living.

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Alan Anderson

Della Tipton Brittain by her first home.

Lester Hangs Out at the Millpond Store

Slumped against the smooth block wall,
against the Pepsi sign,
he concentrates
on the feel of the cigarette
between his lips:
the texture of the bond
where the paper has dried on his mouth.
A young girl walks by
with breasts like lemons
and he makes sure that she sees him
smirk.

At home his mother
cannot smell the warm April wind or
the pungent odor of the gas pump.
He lives by his senses, knowing
the broom handle
his father lays across his back;
the smell of sweat and womanness
as his mother leans across the breakfast
table;
the sixth sense
of the perfection of the sun
on the river in front of his house.

His parents live by whim,
the weather,
God's law.

The tub in front of his house
is supposed to hold flowers,
but his father pees in it
when he's drunk,
his nieces and nephews
dig out the dirt for their dumptrucks.
Once he saw his mother
dump leftover biscuits and gravy in there.
The cats all came to eat it
and she looked pleased.

The cigarette has shrunk
until the fire singes his nose,
reminding him of the burning mattress
when his father tried to sacrifice the house
on the altar of failure.
His mother had saved the day
with a pan of water,
a stick of stove wood
laid across the old man's head.
He laughed out loud,
but then tried to look tough
as a car full of old women pulled up to get
gas.

-- Rita Quillen

From **October Dusk,** *published by Seven Buffaloes Press, Box 249, Big Timber, Montana 59011. Reprinted by permission of the author.*

Cat Fish Corner

Mabel Moser

The following story is an excerpt from a biographical novel-in-progress, ***Fate Remembers****. The story is based upon an oral history recorded by the author in the summer of 1932 from the reminiscences of "Fate" (David Lafayette) Moser. He was the first forester on Mt. Mitchell, from 1917 to 1928. The author, who was Fate's daughter-in-law, remembers the day of the interview. "Fate was now warden of the Beacon Watershed, above Swannanoa, North Carolina. He was 65 years old, but seemed as active as any young man. He was ruddy-complexioned, blue-eyed and had graying hair (still thick) and a bristly moustache, curled at the sides, Kaiser-fashion. I sat on a small campstool opposite Fate, observing and listening to his vigorous accounts of childhood in Catawba County. The incidents related are factual, but many of the names used are fictional."*

You say you'd like for me to tell about when I was a boy? Well, I was born and raised about ten miles from Hickory, North Carolina. It was after the Civil War, in 1869. Our log cabin was in a bend of the Catawba. Our neighbors called the place Catfish Corner. It was that, all right. We had more'n our share of catfish — but I never got tired of eating them.

Did I ever go to school? Yeah, sometimes. What I did go to was no account.

After the Civil War, lots of settlements had no schools at all. But our neighborhood did manage to carry on a three months school. They called it "the old field school."

It was a one-room log cabin, about 20 by 30 feet with logs sawed out on one side and a glass window set in there. We set on benches made out of logs cut in two, about 10 feet long, with sourwood poles for legs — boys on one side, girls on the other.

One teacher taught all seven grades. Most of the time we had about 25 kids, but some didn't come regular. We brought our lunch from home in baskets -- usually cornbread, some kind of meat, and fruit pie. Somebody had to go to the spring every morning to fill the wooden water bucket. We all drank from the bucket. Our cup was a gourd dipper.

At one end there was a great big fireplace about six feet wide. There was two of the largest boys detailed to get there early and start the fire. Two of the largest girls was detailed to sweep the house.

I was just as mean as I could figure out to be. All the time. But mean as I was I never got more than three whippings in one day. 'Cept when one of the others went home and told on me. Then my Dad went into action.

I never learned much. I wasn't interested in book learning. Maybe I got about a seventh grade education. Spelling I liked. We had spelling matches on Fridays. Sometimes I could spell everybody down.

We had school in November, December and January. I had to walk four miles to get there. But if a big snow came, that was my time for fun: snowball fights, sleighing and skating. And snow cream to eat when we got home. That snow was clean, not like what we get these days, with coal dust settling on it. That snow mixed with pure cream and honey for sweetening. I think on it lots of times.

Review

The Adventure of Charlie and His Wheat-Straw Hat

by Berniece T. Hiser

Dodd, Mead & Co., 1986 $12.95 paper.

Pioneer Children of Appalachia

by Joan Anderson

Clarion Books, 1986. $13.95 hardcover

The Relatives Came

by Cynthia Rylant

Bradbury Press, 1985. $12.95 paper.

Miriam Bein

Contemporary children, surrounded by video and computer wizardry, might easily conclude that the act of reading belongs to their own folklore. Happily, three recent titles provide an opportunity to share the joys of reading, as well as the tradition, culture, and history of the Appalachian region with younger children.

The Adventure of Charlie and His Wheat-Straw Hat, a picture book by Berniece Hiser, is a 'Memorat,' a folktale said by the teller "really to have happened." The author recounts, through a child's eyes, a true incident that happened on Frozen Creek, Breathitt County, Kentucky, during the second year of the Civil War. Although seven-year-old Charlie's father and older brothers are away from their home fighting and "money is hard to come by anytime," Charlie is appropriately concerned with a young child's dilemma. He desperately wants a straw hat to wear on the first day of school. Since he cannot buy one, he enlists his ingenious granny to help him make one, and the finished hat becomes Charlie's pride and joy. When he stashes it in a haystack to save it from some rebel soldiers, a hungry sheep poses the next threat. While rescuing the hat again, Charlie inadvertently saves a neighbor's cattle. He is surprised with a ten-dollar gold piece for his bravery, but he explains, "Brave, nothing. Why, I wasn't going to just stand there and let that fool sheep eat my wheat-straw hat."

The charm of this book is strengthened by effective use of language as Hiser meshes the characters' speech with the time frame and the Appalachian background. Although the plot is slim and, unfortunately includes a rather laborious description of the actual hat-making, local dialect carries the reader into Charlie's world, a place with the "sunball ...hotting your poor head" and where a little boy knows that "he could not magic a man into falling dead." Hiser includes a short glossary to help with the vocabulary, but most of the story flows into meaning without special explanation.

Vivid illustrations by Mary Szilagyi further enhance the book's appeal. Vibrant daytime landscapes peopled with barefoot children in overalls are surpassed by only one startlingly serene double-page painting of the countryside at night.

Storyline and pictures in *The Adventure of Charlie and the Wheat-Straw Hat* will grab the attention of younger children but they may need some assistance with the text. Share this book by a writer who considers herself "a true Appalachian."

Pioneer Children of Appalachia, by Joan Anderson, also historical in scope, concentrates on the early pioneer years, 1790-1830, when settlers moved into "northwestern Virginny." In collaboration with photographer, George Ancona, Anderson has created the fictional Davis family, using Ancona's black and white photographs of the staff at Fort New Salem, a living history museum near Salem, West Virginia. Readers may find the blend of fictionalized text with photo reproductions of the created characters disconcerting, but once this obstacle is overcome, there is much to recommend this book.

In *Pioneer Children of Appalachia*, family life centers around subsistence activities, the making of soap, baskets, candles, cloth, quilts, storage bins, and herbal remedies. Children, both male and female, as well as parents and grandparents, are represented in accomplishing the chores. Work and play are intricately mixed. Preparing for winter means working the harvest, but that also includes playing in corn shock tepees or receiving a surprise kiss from the corn-shucker lucky enough to find the stray ear of red corn.

Anderson's writing style and Ancona's photographs are both direct and light-hearted, a combination sure to appeal to children. Appalachian youngsters who are already familiar with traditional crafts through the older generation in their own community or through the current renaissance of interest in traditional folklore, will appreciate the author's effort to expose and document their heritage.

Finally, for a fresh and lively look at family feeling among mountain folk, do not miss *The Relatives Came*, by Cynthia Rylant, a story with more recent focus. Illustrator Stephen Gammell was awarded the prestigious Caldecott Honor Medal in 1986, receiving one of two honorable mentions for the most distinguished American picture book for children. His joyous color pencil drawings precisely capture the festive air and the loving experience of the family's reunion. Rarely in a picture book do text and illustrations maintain equal strengths while complementing each other so perfectly, but, in *The Relatives Came*, Gammell and Rylant have succeeded brilliantly.

In this story, the relatives have come, "up from Virginia...traveling up all those miles (past) strange houses and different mountains" in a multi-colored station wagon, chock full of an odd assortment of luggage and an even odder assortment of people. When they arrive at their destination, an exuberant reunion begins. The hugging goes on for hours and hours, the relatives stay for weeks and weeks, and the fun never lessens. Every page seems to introduce new "shining faces." Young and old, scrawny and fat, untidy and always cheerful, they tend the garden, make repairs, eat all the ripe berries and melons, and fiddle and dance. Togetherness abounds. They take turns at the big supper table and at night, when the beds are full, they gladly overflow onto the floor. "Hugging and eating and new breathing" carries them to summer's end, when sadly the relatives must load up their belongings and drive home to Virginia. The bright pictures of their visit soften into the lonesomeness of separation, as they dream of summers to come. *The Relatives Came* is a homespun, high-spirited romp, a memorable book to treasure and to read again and again.

CHALLENGER

Climb aboard the shuttle,
Turn the power on.
Up in the air 1 minute and 51 seconds.
Doesn't that look like too much fire?
All gone before family and friends.
The biggest space tragedy since 1967.
The first people to die in a space shuttle while in flight.
Our flag now stands at half mast
Saluting Christa and her fellow astronauts.

--Rachel Blaustein

Review

Sometimes a Shining Moment

The Foxfire Experience
by Eliot Wigginton

Anchor Press/Doubleday
Garden City, New York 1985.
$19.95 (hardcover) $10.95 (paper)

Richard Blaustein

It's not easy to skim over *Sometimes a Shining Moment*. Drawn from twenty years of Eliot Wigginton's journals, notes and correspondence, this work (actually three books in one) outlines the career of one of modern America's most influential educators. Presenting powerful concepts in an almost deceptively casual fashion, Wigginton demands a high degree of personal involvement from the reader. Indeed, as we delve into *Sometimes a Shining Moment*, we realize that building and sustaining personal involvement are central to Wigginton's basic philosophy as a teacher and a writer. A great publishing success story in its own right, *Foxfire* actually began as an attempt to overcome the alienation and hostility of high school English students by personally involving them in a tangible, meaningful project--the publication of a magazine devoted to the documentation of southern mountain folk culture. Appearing at a time when many urban Americans were considering moving back to the land, the first *Foxfire* book was an unanticipated best-seller, actually surpassing Doubleday's other publishing coup in the early 70s, Alex Haley's *Roots*. Now in the ninth volume, the *Foxfire* books have not only provided a substantial source of income to underwrite Wigginton's educational experiments but have also inspired the publication of many similar magazines dealing with folklore and oral history by high school students across the country.

However, as Wigginton is the first to tell us, *Foxfire* is only a means towards an end. Like Paolo Freire, Sylvia Ashton Warner, and other great culturally-sensitive teachers, Wigginton has recognized the need to build positive emotional rewards into the learning process. To find pleasure in developing their creative and productive skills, students need to feel good about themselves in the school setting and also believe that the work they are being asked to do is meaningful and worthwhile. *Foxfire* shows us that these objectives can be achieved by students who are lucky enough to receive the attention of teachers who really care about what they are doing.

Book II of *Sometimes a Shining Moment* specifically addresses the problem of developing and maintaining high standards in teaching, particularly the personal qualities and characteristics of those individuals we have come to think of as master teachers. According to Wigginton, master teachers respect their students and their environments; they know how fragile the self-image and self-esteem of a student can be; they know how to break down alienation and foster an atmosphere in which genuine learning can take place; they recognize the need for structure in learning situations and can maintain authority without being domineering; unlike all too many of their colleagues, master teachers keep growing professionally and know how to avoid teacher burn-out. Here again, personal involvement is Wigginton's answer to the problem of quality teaching. Wigginton recognizes that teachers who manage to sustain a high level of personal commitment to their students and profession are all too scarce, but nonetheless he firmly believes that individual efforts *can* affect the system as a whole: he has only limited sympathy for teachers who permit the problems of teaching to get the best of them:

> Teachers tend to be ranged across a wide spectrum of attitudes and stances toward this job. Leaving aside those for whom it is just a job, period, and nothing more, and concentrating on those who care, at one end of the spectrum we find those who have discovered that they can minimize the damage from discouragement by minimizing the passion they invest. They scale down their expectations of their students, they learn not to expect praise or encouragement from others, and they simply do what they can to be competent. They are not irresponsible; neither are they bad teachers. They are simply teachers who have learned to preserve their own sanity and their emotional well-being through the protective device of being basically numb. They are on automatic pilot. (p. 414)

Wigginton himself is clearly one of those teachers who lives for those shining moments when ideas work, students are swept up in the delight of making personal connections and discoveries and hard work seems like play. The last section of this book outlines Wigginton's *Foxfire* course, illustrating how he has managed to reinforce a variety of basic educational skills through an interdisciplinary project which results in a tangible product and also enhances his students' appreciation of their cultural heritage. Wherever he can, Wigginton seeks to implant opportunities for personal growth into the structure of his *Foxfire* course: "There are moments ... when there is that sudden flash of insight about oneself or the surrounding world, or that sudden new understanding, or that moment of self-confidence that arrives as one masters a skill he or she had perhaps feared or shied from previously, and I want to make more of that happen." (p. 383)

Though Eliot Wigginton himself is largely motivated by intrinsic rewards, it is heartening to see him receive the honor and recognition he so clearly deserves. He was named Georgia Teacher of the Year in 1986; *Sometimes a Shining Moment* received Berea College's Weatherford Award for outstanding accomplishments in the publication of Appalachian Studies. Anyone interested in finding positive alternatives to our current educational dilemma in Appalachia and America as a whole ought to read *Sometimes a Shining Moment*, more than once. Highly recommended.

TRIM SLIM LIFFERENT

Once there was a school
Which had many rules
But this school was different
Because there was a Lifferent
Lifferent was a boy
His first name was Troy
The special thing about him
Was that he was very trim
He was so trim
All his friends called him Slim
But Slim had a gigantic head
It was the size of a bed
Because it was a size of a bed
Everyone called him Fred
So Trim Slim Lifferent and his bed sized head
Try as he may, He'll never get a-head.

--Paige Bader

Appalachian Books for All Children

Roberta Herrin

In the Tennessee Mountains, The Dollmaker, River of Earth, Oral History--these are familiar titles in Appachian literature. But who has heard of *M. C. Higgins, the Great, The People Therein, Under the Tree*, or *Jack and the Wonder Beans?* These are familiar titles in Appalachian *chidren's* literature, a rich but often ignored discipline--ignored by both readers and writers. Consequently, the discipline does not evenly conform to the usual categories of children's literature--poetry, picture books, folk literature, modern fantasy, realistic fiction, historical fiction, biography, and informational books.

In Appalachian children's literature, some of these categories are lean; others are bloated with materials, from the most stereotypical and sentimental depictions to the most realistic and honest.

Take biography, for example. Quality biographies of Appalachian men and women are plentiful, but collectively they misrepresent the region because they primarily focus on 18th- and 19th-century figures--Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, Sequoyah, Tecumseh, Andrew Jackson, Stonewall Jackson, Sam Houston. The most recent biography I was able to find, in fact, is Jean Fritz' *Make Way for Sam Houston* (Putnam, 1986). Many children's biographies are about country music personalities--Roy Acuff, the Carter Family, Johnny Cash, Grandpa Jones, Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, Minnie Pearl. Otherwise, few biographies of Appalachian musicians exist. Bessie Smith is one exception, as is Jerry West in the field of sports. Twentieth-century artists, political figures, and authors are all but ignored. It is good to have biographies of Pearl Buck and Thomas Wolfe, but they are hardly representative of the many writers native to the region.

Women, (other than country music stars!) are ignored, too. Rebecca Boone, Rachel Jackson, and Nancy Hanks are subjects of biography by way of their association with famous men. Few women are so honored in their own right. Nancy Ward (the daughter of a Cherokee Indian and a British soldier), Hellen Keller, Martha Berry (an educational reformer in the Georgia mountains at the turn of the century), and Mary Harris Jones (Mother Jones) are notable exceptions. The imbalance in this genre leaves children with limited role models and with a warped view of what the region produces.

Historical fiction, unfortunately, suffers from many of these same limitations. It, too, is heavy with books about the 18th and 19th centuries--the frontier, the Revolution, and the Civil War. One of the genre's most prolific writers, William O. Steele, has produced more than 25 books--both fiction and nonfiction--set in these historical periods. (Steele also writes under the pseudonym Wilson Gage.) A sampling of Steele's titles is illustrative: *Wilderness Journey* (Harcourt, 1953), *Tomahawks and Trouble* (Harcourt, 1955), *Flaming Arrows* (Harcourt, 1957), *Far Frontier* (Harcourt, 1959), *Buffalo Knife* (Harcourt, 1968). I do not mean to suggest that these are poor quality books, but that Steele represents the bias of the genre.

Steele is not only prolific, but popular and sound, as are many of other books set in these time periods. For example, *Trouble River* (Viking, 1969), a frontier story about Dewey Martin's battles with Indians, wolves, and rapids, is typically good Betsy Byars fiction. Reuben Herring's *Fire in the Canebrake* (Broadman, 1980) is staged on Daniel Boone's frontier, but it focuses on a little-explored theme of frontier life--religion. James Forman's *Song of Jubilee* (Farrar, 1971) presents the Civil War dilemma of a slave, Jim Chase, as he faces freedom.

In this discussion of historical fiction, three additional books must be noted because they expand the genre beyond its sometimes limited chronology. *To Spoil the Sun* (Holt, 1976), by Joyce Rockwood, depicts 16th century Appalachian Cherokee Indians--unusual in that it predates the pioneer and frontier settings. *Rock and Willow* (Lothrop, 1963), by Mildred Lee, is set in Depression-era Alabama. An additional, rare 20th-century historical account is Virginia Hamilton's excellent *The House of Dies Drear* (Macmillan, 1968), the story of a middle-class black family who moves from North Carolina to Ohio and to a house that was part of the Underground Railroad. The discipline needs more books of this nature. Just as children need to read contemporary, representative biography, so they need to read about the black Appalachian experience--*and* the effect of Vietnam, the impact of TVA, the women's movement.

In contrast to biography and historical fiction, which have glaring gaps but adequate selections, poetry and fantasy are sparse. Most Appalachian poetry collected and edited for children comes from the oral tradition--ballads, folk songs, jump-rope rhymes. (The Fall 1986 issue of the *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 3, is devoted to Children's Literature and the Folklore Connection.) *As I Walked Out one Evening: A Book of Ballads* (Greenwillow, 1976), edited by Helen Poltz, contains approximately 130 familiar ballads, suitable for grades five through nine. In addition to such editions as this, many of the ballads and folk songs are illustrated as individual picture books. *The Little Mohee: an Appalachian Ballad* (Dutton, 1971) is illustrated by Joanna Troughton. Other notable examples are *Hush Little Baby* (Prentice-Hall, 1968) and *Go Tell Aunt Rhody* (Macmillian, 1974), both illustrated by Aliki. A popular song, *Over in the Meadow* has been illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats in 1972 (Scholastic Book Service) and adapted by John Langstaff in 1967 (Harcourt).

Though it is easy to find children's poetry taken from the oral literature, Appalachian poets, for the most part, have not written for children. Much of their work, however, could be edited for children. *The Poems of Sidney Lanier* (University of Georgia Press, 1967) is often listed in bibliographies of Appalachian children's literature, even though he did not write for children. Elizabeth Madox Roberts, born in 1881, the year Lanier died, is one of the few Appalachian authors to write poetry specifically for children. She produced *Under the Tree* in 1922 (reprinted by University of Kentucky Press, 1985). Roberts' verses are generally rural rather than distinctively Appalachian, as are many of the collections in this category--for example, *Blueberries Lavender: Songs of the Farmer's Children* (Addison-Wesley, 1977), by Nancy Dingman Watson. In *Hard Scrabble Harvest* (Doubleday, 1976) Dahlov Ipcar writes poems in sing-song, jump-rope rhythms that could belong to any rural place. But no poet has emerged to do for the Appalachian child what Gwendolyn Brooks and Langston Hughes have done for the urban black child--to express his cultural identity. Appalachia is expressed in the poetry for children either by the songs and rhymes from the oral tradition or by general, rural representations.

Though the poetry lacks variety and depth, modern fantasy is the weakest genre of all. What does exist is good. Alexander Key, the most widely known writer in this category, has produced four such books. First were *The Forgotten Door* (Westminister, 1965) and *Escape to Witch Mountain* (Westminister, 1968), which was popularized in the 1975 Disney movie. These books place children from other planets in the Appalachian Mountains. A *dog* from another planet is the hero of *Jagger, Dog from Elsewhere* (Westminister, 1976), which is set in Alabama. *The Preposterous Adventures of Swimmer* (Westminister, 1973), about an otter who has human reason and speech, is the most distinctly Appalachian, though much of it is predictable.

Another name in modern Appalachian fantasy for children is Jane Louise Curry, author of *The Daybreakers* (Harcourt, 1970) and *The Watchers* (Atheneum, 1975). *The Daybreakers* takes place in West Virginia and centers on three children (two black, one white) who enter another world through an underground passage. *The Watchers* combines fantasy with the contemporary theme of a coal company's claim on a West Virginia family's land. In both of Curry's books, Appalachian culture--dress, language, names, occupations--are central to the fantasy. An even greater blend of fantasy and Appalachian culture is achieved by John Lawson in *You Better Come Home With Me* (Crowell, 1966). A psychological fantasy, so to speak, about a young boy's search to know who he is. Though they are not plentiful, the fantasy selections offer some of the best insights into the complexity of the region and the people's emotional responses to place.

While modern fantasy and poetry selections are thin, picture books, informational books, and realistic fiction are flourishing. Like poetry, Appalachian picture books draw heavily from the oral tradition. Just as the ballads and folk songs have been individually illustrated, so have the folk tales. James Still has retold one of the most famous Jack tales in *Jack and the Wonder Beans* (Putnam, 1977), illustrated by Margot Tomes. Gail Haley has illustrated her own adaptation of this same tale in *Jack and the Beantree* (Crown, 1986). (Haley discusses this book in "From the Ananse Stories to the Jack Tales: My Work with Folktales," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly, 11, No 3 (1986, 118-121.)* *Old Man Whickutt's Donkey* (Parent's Magazine, 1975) is La Fontaine's fable set in Appalachia, retold by Mary Calhoun, and illustrated by Tomie de Paola. Similarly, Ruth Sawyer has adapted an old

cumulative tale in *Journey Cake, Ho!* which earned illustrator Robert McCloskey a 1954 Caldecott Honor Book Award. An unusual Appalachian twist is given to the Goldilocks story in *Deep in the Forest* (Dutton, 1976), a wordless, visual rendering, by Brinton Turkle, in which a bear cub enters an Appalachian cabin and faces the traditional three bowls, three chairs, three beds, and - finally - a weeping, yellow-haired child.

Notable Appalachian picture books which do not use folk tales are equally abundant. Lynd Ward's *The Biggest Bear* (Houghton, 1952) -- a 1953 Caldecott award winner -- has become a classic, as has Miska Miles' *Hoagie's Rifle-Gun* (Little-Brown, 1970)--both books having to do with a young boy's relationship with an animal. These are old favorites. As the genre develops it produces new quality. *We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes* (Macmillan, 1980), written by Lillie Chaffin and illustrated by Lloyd Bloom, is the story of a poor family's efforts to stay warm during the winter.

The work of Cynthia Rylant, a new and refreshing picture-book author, is a bit cheerier. A native of West Virginia, Rylant has given us three remarkable books. *When I Was Young in the Mountains* (Dutton, 1982), illustrated by Diane Goode, was a 1983 Caldecott Honor Book. *The Relatives Came* (Bradbury, 1985), illustrated by Stephen Gammel, was a 1986 Honor Book (reviewed in this issue on page 32.) Her newest is *Night in the Country* (Bradbury, 1986), illustrated by Mary Szilagyi. Gammel and Szilagyi have illustrated two additional 1986 books by noted Appalachians: George Ella Lyon's *A Regular Rolling Noah* (illus. Stephen Gammel, Bradbury) and Berniece T. Hiser's *The Adventure of Charlie and His Wheat-Straw Hat: A Memorat* (illus. Szilagyi; Dodd, Mead; reviewed in this issue on page 32). The Appalachian picture book genre looks promising!

Informational books on Appalachian subjects are myriad -- impossible to list and illustrate fully. States, history, geography, folklore (superstitions, signs, sayings), crafts (especially quilting), music, flora, fauna, national parks, camping, the coal industry, Indians--these are but a few of the many topics. Eliot Wigginton's *Foxfire* series is a staple of this category. Of Allen Carpenter's *Enchantment of America* series (Children's Press, 1978-79), the volumes on individual Appalachian states are adequate introductions to the history, geography, and culture of the region. Of the many books on plants, Carol Lerner's *Flowers of a Woodland Spring* (Morrow, 1979) is a lovely, detailed introduction to ephemerals. *Pioneer Children of Appalachia* (Houghton/Clarion, 1986) is a new "living history" book which uses photographs from the recreated Fort New Salem to illustrate activities of 19th-century pioneers (reviewed on page 32). These titles represent the more traditional fare in informational books.

Other books are distinctive in their treatment of exceptional subjects. In *Fighting Mountaineers: The Struggle for Justice in the Appalachians* (Houghton, 1979), Edwin Hoffman documents the Appalachians' struggles against various types of injustice from the 1800s to the 1970s. *Social Welfare* (Watts, 1976), by Walter Dean Myers, is a history and critique of the welfare system and the prejudices surrounding it. With photographic objectivity, Bruce and Nancy Roberts capture the poverty, unemployment, disease, and beauty of Madison County, North Carolina, in *Where Time Stood Still: A Portrait of Appalachia* (Crowell-Collier, 1970). Informational books such as these help to rid the literature of the prevalent misconceptions about the region.

Realistic Appalachian fiction is the richest genre; its quality and subject matter are, subsequently, varied. Writers of realistic fiction range from the little-known--May Justus--to the widely-known--James Still, Jesse Stuart, John Fox, Jr., Rebecca Caudill, Vera and Bill Cleaver, Virginia Hamilton, Lois Lenski. Lois Lenski has written about Arkansas sharecroppers, *Cotton in My Sack*; early Florida settlers, *Strawberry Girl*; and Appalachian mountaineers, *Blue Ridge Billy* (Lippincott, 1947). This 40-year-old book, which stereotypes the region and rests on a fairly contrived ending, has been replaced by better fiction, such as Robert Burch's books about rural Georgia. Burch carves his plots out of hard reality. *Queenie Peavy* (Viking, 1966), the story of a young girl's anger, won a number of prestigious awards, including distinction as an ALA Notable Book. Another widely known writer is Betsy Byars. Two of her best books are *Midnight Fox* (Viking, 1968), an objective animal story, and *Summer of the Swans* (Viking, 1970), the story of a retarded child. Rebecca Caudill's *A Certain Small Shepherd* (Holt, 1965) and *Did You Carry the Flag Today, Charley?* (Holt, 1971) are classics, as is Vera and Bill Cleaver's *Where the Lilies Bloom* (Lippincott, 1969). This book won a National Book Award in 1970 and was in the same year made into a movie.

More than any other genre in Appalachian Literature, realistic fiction reflects the concerns, changes, growth of the 20th century. The fiction of May Justus is a good example. She is to realistic fiction what William O. Steele is to historical fiction. From the 1920s to the 1970s, she wrote more than 50 books (many of which are out of print) about children in No-End Hollow, Far Beyant, and Little Twin Mountain. The characters are flat; the stories are formulaic, but rich in mountain lore and culture. Justus frequently builds plots around ballads, for example, and the "outlanders" who collected them. She is a local colorist--not a realist--but even her fiction comes to reflect social change. In 1963 she wrote *New Boy in School* (Hastings), which is about a black child moving from Newton, Louisiana, to Nashville, Tennessee. The story is one Justus has told before--a child develops self confidence and earns acceptance--but the presentation of the black Appalachian experience is significant.

Justus paves the way for the complex realistic fiction of writers such as Virginia Hamilton, one of the biggest names in American children's literature. Hamilton has set two nationally recognized books in Appalachia: *The House of Dies Drear* (Macmillan 1968), classed as historical fiction, and *M. C. Higgins the Great* (Macmillan, 1974), which won both the National Book Award and the coveted Newbery Award. Aside from their fine prose and believable characterization, the depiction of the black Appalachian experience (missing from most of the historical fiction, the biography, and the poetry) makes these books unique.

M. C. Higgins is also a story about strip mining, a theme taken up by many contemporary realistic fiction writers. Beverly Crook's *Fair Annie of Old Mule Hollow* (McGraw, 1978) is stereotyped and romanticized, but the descriptions of environmental destruction are powerful. James Forman's *A Ballad for Hogskin Hill* (Farrar, 1979), an ALA Best Book, addresses the same issue but with more complex characterization than Crook can manage.

Another common literary theme in realistic fiction (and one explored also by Justus and Hamilton) is migration among the Appalachian people, both outmigration and in-migration. The exodus from Appalachia to the North--Detroit, Cincinnati, Chicago--has been recorded by Ruth Wolff in *A Crack in the Sidewalk* (Crowell, 1965); by Vera and Bill Cleaver in *Mimosa Tree* (Lippincott, 1970); by Dorothy Hamilton in *Neva's Patchwork Pillow* (Herald Press, 1975); and by Katherine Borland and Helen Speicher in *Good-by to Stony Crick* (McGraw Hill, 1975). Such works prepare young readers for adult fiction like *The Dollmaker*.

In-migration is just as common a theme. Local color writers of the 19th century frequently depict the attraction of the outsider to the mountains. Mildred Lee's 1980 novel, *The People Therein* (Houghton/Clarion), is in this vein; it tells of a Bostonian who visits the Great Smoky Mountains, falls in love with 18-year-old Lanthy, briefly returns to Boston, and comes back to "claim" Lanthy, so to speak, after she has born his child. (This book prepares adolescents for adult fiction such as Lee Smith's *Oral History*.) Other books tell of native Appalachians who have left the region and return because of disillusionment, necessity, homesickness. *Big Blue Island* (Williams, Collins, and World, 1964) by Wilson Gage [W. O. Steele] and *Jud* by Charles Raymond (Houghton, 1968) are good examples. Doris Buchanan adds a contemporary twist to this theme in *Return to Bitter Creek* (Viking, 1986), exploring three generations of Appalachian women and their feelings about each other--a grandmother, a mother, a daughter. The black experience, migration, the coal industry, Appalachian women--these are appropriate subjects for 20th century realistic fiction.

The imbalance, the gaps, the stereotypes need not be impediments to appreciation of Appalachian children's literature. A number of fine bibliographies identify the best of this discipline. Jim Wayne Miller's *Reading, Writing, Region* (Appalachian Consortium Press, 1984) is a good place to start. This inexpensive paperback provides an overview of resource materials including a list of bibliographies. An older--but still sound--work is George E. Bennett's *Appalachian Books and Media for Public and College Libraries* (West Virginia University Library, 1975), which includes a few out-of-print items not found in newer bibliographies. The *Kentucky, Tennessee West Virginia* volume of the American Library Association's *Reading for Young People* series is an additional good resource, edited by Barbara Mertins (1985).

By far, the best resource guide and bibliography for parents and teachers is Judy Martin's *Choosing Books for Appalachian Children: An Annotated Bibliography* (Berea College Draper Service Center, 1982). Martin's introduction to this volume is excellent. Her suggestions for "media tie-ins" and related activities will impel any reader toward the very best Appalachian children's literature and thereby promote respect for this stepchild discipline.

Sunny Side and the Kentucky Soldier

Excerpts from a correspondence

compiled by Martha Crowe

Edward Owings Guerrant, a Captain in the Confederate Army from Kentucky, met Mary Jane DeVault, a 16 year-old East Tennessean, at her home in Leesburg, Tennessee, in the spring of 1864. They began a correspondence which developed into friendship's and deepened into love. Guerrant's nickname for Mary was "Sunny Side" (taken from the name of her home in Leesburg) and he signed himself simply "A Kentucky Soldier." The 193 letters between them began in August 1864 and continued through June 1868, revealing the lovers' personal struggles as well as their observations of the effects of the War and Reconstruction on those around them. Although the letters concentrate on adult concerns, occasionally they provide descriptions of school and childhood during these turbulent years.

After the War, Guerrant returned to his home in Sharpsburg, Kentucky, and taught until he went to New York to study medicine. He told DeVault of the closing ceremonies in a letter dated October 11, 1865.

> My school is out and I am most sorry for it although it was severe labor and close confinement. I miss the happy faces and merry voices of the children of Fair View! Had a grand demonstration at the close of the session. Examination, Exhibition and Party. Everything passed off very pleasantly. Many people present.... Had 61 scholars and all good looking and smart. Fulfilled your wish (only with a little variation). Instead of kissing a "black eyed boy for you"--I kissed a blue eyed girl for you.

In November of 1865 Mary DeVault described the hardships of Confederate sympathizers in pro-Union East Tennessee but concluded that some things were returning to normal.

> Our little village must not be forgotten. It is thriving amidst all the sorrow. A splendid school taught by Rev. S. E. Campbell and Miss E. Stephens, both accomplished scholars. My brothers go. Several grown girls. I want to go, but my wants are generally unheeded.

As the only daughter with four younger brothers and a dying mother, Mary was forced to stay home and run the huge household.

Edward moved to Bath County, Kentucky, and in a letter dated March 31, 1866 described his situation.

> I am living, by invitation at Mr. George Hamilton's delightful country residence and pursuing my studies. Am teaching a class of advanced girls and boys--(my sister among them). Am paid $100 per month.

On May 1, 1866, while describing the May Day exercises he tells Mary that,

> You might have enjoyed our May Day exercises, consisting of "Spelling Battles--" Recitations in History, Latin and Greek, etc. etc. etc., wreaths of victory, crowns of flowers presented to the victors of each class by the May Queen, etc. etc. etc.,--all pleasantly terminated with a Pic Nic of Ice Cream and Cake for the whole school, prepared by our noble landlady, Mrs. Hamilton. How much I should have loved for you to have seen and enjoyed these gala-day exercises, and that I might have enjoyed your pleasure and your company, (a little selfish myself;--but you will forgive me, for I am only selfish about you.)

The next month Edward gave his reason for giving up teaching and going to medical school. He believed that "associations with scenes of violence, or sorrow and suffering" along with the "investment of authority where rigor was a cardinal virtue" had caused his finer instincts to be "buried beneath the stern countenance of war" making him too strict and demanding to be a good teacher.

> I perceive, in the government of my school, I am inclined to be more rigid that I was formerly--tho not by any means wanting in affection for the children--all of whom are very dear to me. But I find that my rules are more strict, and their violation excites in me a greater indignation than before I became a soldier. And though I believe I have the model school in this part of the State, and am paid all I could desire, still I should be very unwilling to follow it as a lifelong profession. The government of 40 children is no pleasant nor light undertaking. And yet do not understand that anything unpleasant occurs. Our school moves on as pleasantly and as softly as the "planets in their turn"--not a word of recrimination, not an unkind thought or word--all like a family of brothers and sisters.
>
> July 7, 1866

Mary described the interruption of routine activities at an academy for children of all ages in the following passage:

> Must tell you I went to Wash. College last Friday to attend the examinations. It was thought fifteen hundred persons were present.... I heard nothing--but the subjects of composition and music. The men were abused on all sides. One composition of the subject "Man is ever changing as the moon," another "False deceiver away." Would play "Naughty man" and all such things. Bowman's girls had splendid compositions...one "How to entertain strangers."— At the college about 30 Yankees gathered clubs and drew their pistols to fight some Rebel boys. But Shipley (the Sherrif) interfered. I never saw so many drunk men. Barrels of brandy on the ground for sale. Rebels all had to leave about four o'clock. Such a Country, I was so mad.
>
> June 20, 1867

On September 18, 1867 Mary mentioned visiting the home of her dying uncle.

> Papa there tonight--has left me to keep the children from tearing the house down, and I find I can't do much with them, wish you could hear what a noise they are making. They have become so used to dying and sickness that they don't seem to be serious when they hear one is near unto death, their age excuses them to some extent.

Despite the violence, suffering and despair brought about by the Civil War, the children of Appalachia apparently learned to adjust and to go about the business of simply being children; resuming of the normal routines of childhood could not have occurred, however, without the compassion and sacrifice of those who loved them.

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Golden Days, a Beginner's Guide to Collecting Family History and Community Traditions was created so that even young children could collect an oral history effectively.

It's a fill-in-the blank survey with a section on family and personal history and a longer section on family and community traditions. Some of the questions that the beginning interviewers ask are, "Name and describe some of the games you played as a child?" "What do you remember about the house you grew up in?" "What do you remember about the town or community you grew up in?" "Do you remember any stories that were told to you as a child?" "What were some of the special occasions in your family and community?"

The guide was developed by Richard Blaustein, Director of the Center for Appalachian Studies Services at ETSU, and Joan Moser, Director of Appalachian Studies at Warren Wilson College. "This guide provides us with a great deal of information concerning our history and traditions, and it also provides a pleasant and meaningful introduction to carrying out systematic research," says Dr. Blaustein.

Elementary, high school and college teachers in East Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia and Florida have been using *Golden Days* guides since 1979 to introduce students to the collecting and study of family history and community traditions. During the Tennessee Homecoming '86 celebration, *Golden Days* surveys were also distributed to 1,672 schools in all 157 school districts in the state. Hundreds of completed histories have been given to the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services. Thus, we can ensure that future generations will be able to find out what the past was really like for individuals from all walks of life.

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Alice Shockley, an ETSU student who interviewed her father, described her preparations. "I met with him and we went over the questions so he could have his answers planned. And then I did the actual interview on tape. It took about three and a half hours from the reviewing to the last question." She kept a diary at that time:

"First day, Friday, November 11, 1983, 1:30 p.m. - Today when I went to the house he had just finished working in tobacco and was carrying the tobacco stalks out of the barn. He told me to wait until he fed his three baby calves and eight baby pigs.

"When he finished we went up to the house and sat at the kitchen table. Mom poured us a cup of coffee and we started reviewing the questions on the interview sheet.

"At first when we were going through the background information he seemed bored. But when we got into Section II on Folklife Experiences a smile came across his face and he seemed to enjoy talking about his life when he was a child.

"After we finished and I was getting ready to leave, he told me that I had brought back memories of his childhood that he hadn't thought of in 40 years. Some were happy, others were sad. But the smile on his face told me the good ones far outweighed the bad ones.

"Thursday, November 24, 1983, 10:30 a.m. (Thanksgiving Day) -This was the big day Daddy had been waiting for--the day we actually did the interview."

"I had to play it to him so he could hear himself. He had a big grin on his face, only this time I couldn't tell if he was proud of himself, or whether he was laughing at himself. He told me, 'You don't sound like yourself. You sould like a little girl.' He also asked, 'And the teacher gets to listen to this?'

" 'Yes, Daddy,' I said.

" 'And this is how you get your grade?'

" 'Yes, Daddy,' I said.

" 'You poor thang,' he said. "But I could tell that he was only kidding. He was proud of himself. And as I was packing my recorder and my huge pile of papers and getting ready to leave he said, 'I think I deserve a trophy for this. Do **you** think I'll get a trophy?'

" 'Well Daddy,' I said, 'I sure doubt it.' "

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We will provide the *Golden Days* guide at no cost. What we ask in return is that you share your results with us!

William Barnhill Collection. Courtesy of the Southern Appalachian Photographic Archives, Mars Hill College.

Children seated at desks in rural school, Morehead, Kentucky, August, 1940.

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Contributors

Alan Anderson is a free-lance writer, photographer and illustrator who lives in Mars Hill, North Carolina.

Alice Anthony is a graduate student at East Tennessee State University. Her work has been featured in *Photo Review* and *Now and Then*.

Marilou Awiakta is the author of *Abiding Appalachia: Where Mountain* and *Atom Meet* and *Rising Fawn and the Fire Mystery* (St. Luke's Press). Her poetry and essays have also appeared in *Homewords, Touchstone, Ideals, Southern Exposure, These Are Our Voices* and *Now and Then*.

Jan Barnett lives in Erwin, Tennessee and works for Tennessee Eastman in Kingsport. She has published previously in *Appalachian Heritage*. The story in this issue, she says, "is about the fears a child experiences as a result of living near a nuclear fuel plant like the one in Erwin."

Paige Bader is in the fourth grade at Towne Acres School in Johnson City.

Miriam Bein is the head of children's services at the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Rachel Blaustein is a fourth-grader at Southside School in Johnson City.

Ed Cabbell is the founder and director of the John Henry Memorial Foundation, which publishes books and produces records. He also organizes the yearly John Henry Music Festival. He was the guest editor of our "Black Appalachians" issue last year.

Jennie Carter lives in Nashville and until recently worked as an assistant for educational affairs to Governor Lamar Alexander. She is now a consultant to U.S. Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett.

Martha Crowe is an assistant professor of English at East Tennessee State University and has lived in East Tennessee all her life.

Joyce Duncan is a writer and photographer teaching English at ETSU. She and Steve Bradshaw have co-authored *Heirs to Misfortune*, an account of the Pelham/Humphries family published this year by Overmountain Press.

Anthony Feathers, of Greeneville, Tennessee, is a graduate student pursuing his MAT at ETSU. His goal is to teach art in an East Tennessee high school. His dream is to be a syndicated cartoonist.

Susie Gott, a recent graduate of Warren-Wilson College, is a fiddler for "Talk of the Town" of Smithville, Tennessee.

Roberta Herrin teaches English and children's literature at ETSU. She will be teaching a graduate workshop in children's literature this summer at ETSU.

Jane Hicks, a native of East Tennessee, graduated from Emory and Henry University and earned a master's degree from ETSU. She is a counselor and sponsor of the literary magazine at Sullivan North High School in Kingsport.

Gretchen McCroskey teaches English in Bristol, Virginia. Her poems have appeared in *Mountain Ways*, the *New River Free Press* and *Now and Then*.

Artus Moser is a teacher, folklorist, local historian and retired professor from Lincoln Memorial University.

Mabel Moser is a professional librarian who worked for Mars Hill College prior to her retirement. Her family has been involved with Appalachian studies since the 1930s. She and her husband, Artus, live in Buckeye Cove in Swannanoa, North Carolina.

Kenneth Murray's newest book, *Highland Trails*, is published by the East Tennessee Tourism Council in Jonesborough, Tennessee. His book of photographs, *A Portrait of Appalachia* was published by the Appalachian Consortium Press.

Judy Odom teaches English at Science Hill High School in Johnson City. She recently won the Sherwood Anderson prize for fiction. Her work has appeared in *Crescent Review, Homewords, and Mississippi Arts* and *Letters*.

Alina Oxendine is in the sixth grade at Stratton Elementary School in Johnson City.

Dan Puckett, a senior at Science Hill High School in Johnson City, is on the scholar's bowl team, a member of the chess club and on the Olympics of the Mind team.

Rita Quillen, an ETSU alumni and a fellow of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services, is a poet, critic and editor from Hiltons, Virginia. Her book of poetry, *October Dusk*, has just been published by Seven Buffaloes Press.

Drema S. Redd teaches English at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia.

Bettie Sellers is Goolsby Professor of English at Young Harris College, Young Harris, Georgia. She is author of several books of poetry. Her latest is *Liza's Monday* published by Appalachian Consortium Press.

Barbara Smith is a poet, short story writer, novelist, and the chairman of the division of humanities at Alderson-Broaddus College in Philippi, West Virginia.

Michael Smith teaches photography in the art department at East Tennessee State University. He's a graduate of Yale University. He has organized two traveling exhibitions of his work and is curator and organizer of the Edward Weston exhibition that is now traveling across the state.

Delia Tipton Brittain is 83 and has just had her first book published, *Upper Laurel and Her People* (Southern Appalachian Center of Mars Hill College).

Pat Verhulst teaches English and creative writing at Mars Hill College. She has been writing poetry, fiction and journals for 15 years. She holds workshops, readings and informal gatherings to encourage writers in the region.

Jane Woodside is a folklorist who recently finished her master's thesis for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on womenless weddings, (a folk drama). She has written for *Business Week* and the *Abelmarle Monthly*.

Now and Then Magazine

Now and Then is published three times a year by the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services at East Tennessee State University. Subscriptions are $7.50 per year ($10.00 for institutions and libraries).

Submissions of poetry, fiction, scholarly and personal essays, graphics and photographs concerned with Appalachian life are welcomed if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. We will be careful but not responsible for all materials. Address all correspondence to: Editor, **Now and Then,** CASS, Box 19, 180A, ETSU, Johnson City TN 37614-0002.

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SBR NO. 130-061-86

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Penny Gosnell playing banjo on her friend Debbie's porch, Sodom, North Carolina.

NOW AND THEN

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